



Town of Arlington, MA Redevelopment Board

Agenda & Meeting Notice February 5, 2024

Per Board Rules and Regulations, public comments will be accepted during the public comment periods designated on the agenda. Written comments may be provided by email to cricker@town.arlington.ma.us by Monday, February 5, 2024, at 3:00 pm. The Board requests that correspondence that includes visual information should be provided by Friday, February 2, 2024, at 12:00 pm.

The Arlington Redevelopment Board will meet Monday, February 5, 2024 at 7:30 PM in the **Arlington Community Center, Main Hall, 27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476**

1. Review Meeting Minutes

7:30 pm The Board will review and vote to approve meeting minutes.

2. Master Plan Implementation Committee

7:35 pm The Board will vote to disband the Master Plan Implementation Committee, formed to implement the recommendations of the 2015 Arlington Master Plan.

3. Board Rules and Regulations

7:40 pm The Board will discuss proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations with regard to administrative review of signage proposals.

4. Design Guidelines

8:00 pm The Board will discuss the Commercial Design Guidelines project and review existing Design Guidelines.

5. 882-892 Massachusetts Avenue

8:25 pm The Board will review the changes made and agreed to by the developer in order to meet the conditions of the original special permit granted by the Board, and will discuss whether further changes are necessary.

6. Open Forum

8:45 pm Except in unusual circumstances, any matter presented for consideration of the Board shall neither be acted upon, nor a decision made the night of the presentation. There is a three-minute time limit to present a concern or request.

7. New Business

9:00 pm

8. Adjourn

9:15 pm (Estimated)



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Review Meeting Minutes

Summary:

7:30 pm The Board will review and vote to approve meeting minutes.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▢ Reference Material	01082024_DRAFT_AMENDED_Minutes_Redevelopment_Board.pdf	01082024 DRAFT AMENDED Minutes Redevelopment Board
▢ Reference Material	01222024_DRAFT_AMENDED_Minutes_Redevelopment_Board.pdf	01222024 DRAFT AMENDED Minutes Redevelopment Board

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, January 8, 2024, at 7:30 PM
Community Center, Main Hall
27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Rachel Zsebery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Shaina Korman-Houston, Kin Lau, Stephen Revilak

STAFF: Claire Ricker, Director of Planning and Community Development; Sarah Suarez, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development

The Chair called the meeting of the Board to order.

The Chair opened with **Agenda Item 1 – Organizational Meeting.**

Mr. Benson nominated Mr. Lau as Vice-Chair. Mr. Lau accepted the nomination. The Board voted unanimously.

Mr. Lau nominated Ms. Zsebery as Chair. Ms. Zsebery accepted the nomination. The Board voted unanimously.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 2 – 882-892 Massachusetts Avenue.**

Ms. Ricker introduced John Murphy from the development team that built 882-892 Mass Ave.

The Chair noted that the Board has not reopened the Special Permit at this time. Several aspects of the development diverged from what was approved by the Board, and the purpose of this discussion is to determine any mitigation to correct those issues.

Ms. Ricker said that at the Board's request, she spoke with the architect. The current architect is Market Square Architects, which is different from the architects who started the project. She has also spoken with Mr. Murphy, the development consultant working with the owner on the project. The issues previously raised by the Board are the aluminum storefront, the white accents, the exterior vent penetrations on the Mass Ave side of the building, and the location and size of the affordable units. The developer assured Ms. Ricker that the white accents will be painted to match the building. The aluminum storefront can be painted, but there are concerns about weather-resistance. The developer is willing to paint the exterior dryer vents, but there are mitigating factors that went into the decision to include those vent penetrations, which were included on the construction drawings. Jim Feeney, Town Manager, has been working with the developer and owner on the regulatory agreement with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) about the affordable units. Mr. Feeney has written a memo answering some of the Board's questions about the location and size of the affordable units.

Mr. Murphy addressed various issues raised by the Board:

- He noted that signage had also been a concern of the Board's. The tenant who will be moving into the commercial space is taking the lead on the signage, and they are aware of the bylaws regulating signs.
- The repainting of the white accents is underway, and they are prepared to move forward as soon as the weather permits. They are trying to get in touch with the sider to find out why the white accents were initially included.
- The aluminum storefront can be repainted, but not until the weather is consistently above 50 degrees.
- Changes to the building's design meant that all the residential units are under 700 square feet. EOHLC generally requires that affordable units not be under 700 square feet, but they are working with EOHLC to get approval, given that all the units are under that size, and the affordable units are comparable to the rest of the units.

- The development is an all-electric building, which meant that the walls were packed with vents and wiring. When the final building designs were created, the planners felt that the only possible place to put the dryer vents was on the exterior of the building. They submitted those building designs to the Inspectional Services Department (ISD), and they were approved.

Mr. Lau appreciated that the white accents would be repainted. He noted that the original renderings included color transitions on inside corners, but the building now has color transitions on outside corners, which makes buildings look flat. Mr. Murphy replied that they have the boom lift available and can repaint those sections.

Mr. Lau would like to review the choice of paint for the storefront to be submitted to the Board. Regular paint will peel and speckle.

Mr. Lau noted that the vents stick out, and repainting them may not be enough. He requested that the developer look for more architecturally appealing types of louvers and bring samples of different options to show the Board.

Ms. Korman-Houston asked what happened in terms of the size and location of affordable units and how they were selected. Mr. Benson noted that the Board's decision to grant a Special Permit for this project said that the affordable units must be dispersed throughout the building and comparable to market rate units. Mr. Murphy said that no one involved with the project was aware of the requirement that affordable units be at least 700 square feet. He said that the affordable units are dispersed throughout the building. Ms. Korman-Houston said that the affordable units should reflect the range of unit sizes in the building. Mr. Murphy said that they are currently working with the state and the Town Manager to make sure that they are in compliance. He also noted that the affordable units are floating, so they will not have a fixed position in the building as tenants move out and units turn over.

Mr. Benson noted that the decision to grant the Special Permit says, "The owner shall work with the Department of Planning and Community Development to comply with all requirements of Section 8.2, Affordable Housing Requirements." He asked Mr. Murphy what sort of interaction they had with DPCD during the building process. Mr. Murphy said that they reached out to DPCD early on to ask where to start, because they weren't familiar with building in Arlington. DPCD recommended a few different agencies for the developer to hire to guide the process and work with the Town; they took the recommendation and hired one of those agencies, MCO Housing Services. He does not know if that agency had any further communication with DPCD.

Mr. Revilak said that he was happy to see the mention of floating affordable units in Mr. Feeney's memo because it allows more flexibility in dealing with tenants whose income may change. He agrees with Mr. Lau about finding a different type of venting louver.

The Chair said that if the developer cannot find a better, much less obtrusive, option for the external vent penetrations, they may have to build a chase inside the interior of the units. She feels that the vents detract significantly from the appearance of the building. She wants the architect to come back to a future meeting with a proposal for replacing the vents. She asked Mr. Murphy to notify Ms. Ricker whether they will come to the Board's January 22 or February 5 meeting.

Mr. Murphy asked how they were allowed to get this far, given that before getting their building permit, they submitted drawings which included the external vents and they should have gone through every department, including DPCD. The Chair replied that after the Board issues a Special Permit, if the developer's plans change significantly, they are required to come back before the Board for a review of any changes that are made to the plans for the façade.

The Chair summarized that the recent architectural rendering will be circulated to the Board, and Mr. Lau will review the color changes he would like to see. Mr. Lau asked Mr. Murphy to ask the architect to submit a sketch-up model to the Department of Planning and Community Development. He indicated that he would like to make a sketch-up model a requirement for all future projects.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 3 – Citizen Warrant Articles.**

Ms. Ricker said that the Board would be hearing from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund about the proposed Affordable Housing Overlay, and from James Fleming about two proposed Warrant Articles.

Affordable Housing Overlay:

Karen Kelleher, chair of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and representative of the Affordable Housing Overlay Working Group. The Working Group includes a variety of people with expertise in the area of zoning and affordable housing. She summarized Arlington's current affordable housing:

- About 700 public housing units, built between 1940 and 1983, and 146 privately owned Section 8 housing units – these units are typically reserved for people with very low incomes.
- The Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) has created 150 affordable units over the past 20-25 years; they have additional projects in development that are expected to create at least 44 more affordable units.
- About 142 units have been created via two tools which require developers to pay for affordable housing:
 - inclusionary zoning law, which requires that 15% of units be designated affordable when developing market-rate housing in projects of six units or more
 - 40B projects, which require that 20-25% of units are affordable, and can be used in communities with less than 10% of their total housing stock designated as affordable (Arlington is currently at 6.37%)

Arlington has many tools in its toolbox to help create more affordable housing. The current proposal will increase those options.

About a year ago, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund created a five-year action plan. One of the primary strategies was to create more affordable housing, and the main action item under this strategy is more predictable permitting. By definition, affordable housing is housing that the market will never create, because it costs more money to build and operate than it can generate. The Trust Funds estimate is that each unit of affordable housing requires \$400,000 to \$500,000 in subsidies. There are two ways to subsidize affordable housing – one is to get developers to pay for it, via inclusionary zoning and 40B projects. Arlington has not gotten much affordable housing out of its inclusionary zoning law, because it has not permitted much multi-family housing. MBTA Communities is expected to change to some extent, but Arlington's MBTA Communities Overlay District doesn't include many parcels large enough to trigger inclusionary zoning.

The second way to subsidize affordable housing is with state and federal subsidies. Large amounts of state and federal subsidies are available, but Arlington has only obtained them on three occasions. To create enough affordable housing to make a meaningful impact, it is critical that we leverage state and federal subsidies.

The Working Group spoke to affordable housing developers to find out what they need to build projects:

- sites large enough for EOHLC to fund, which tends to be at least 30 units
- funding, which needs to include some Town funding
- permits – this is the issue the Working Group is trying to address with the proposed warrant article
- alignment – all the relevant Town bodies speaking with one voice about what they support

The Working Group is proposing an overlay that would apply throughout Arlington. It would require a high percentage of deed-restricted affordable housing and would allow some income mixing to promote housing diversity and inclusion. It will only work with developments large enough to attract state and federal subsidies, so the Town needs a transparent path to permitting buildings of that size. Their estimate is that the minimum parcel size for such a development is about half an acre, or 20,000 square feet, and they looked at where such parcels exist in Arlington. Such parcels exist in residential, commercial, and industrial districts.

Affordable Housing Overlay District proposal:

- At least 70% of the units in a project would need to be deed-restricted for people earning at or below 60% of area median income, which is the income level required by state and federal subsidies.
- Two additional stories over what is allowed in the underlying zoning.

- Setbacks as allowed in the underlying zoning (or an average of area setbacks, in neighborhoods that include a lot of non-conforming properties).
- Requirement of half a parking space per unit in residential districts; no parking required in commercial districts. This is based on HCA's data showing that low-income housing tends to have lower parking utilization than market rate housing.
- Commercial and industrial districts have untapped potential that would be important to leverage to achieve significant amounts of affordable housing. The Working Group does not have a perfect solution for the zoning issues raised by developments in those districts. It may work to require one floor of commercial and/or community space in those districts, but financing that kind of space can be challenging and can make it difficult to attract developers.

The Working Group would like to bring this proposal to 2024 Annual Town Meeting in April if possible. There's a lot of support for affordable housing in Arlington, but it's not easy to create and will take more conversation. Their proposed timeline is:

- January 8 – speak with Redevelopment Board
- By January 26 – submit warrant article
- February to March – at least two public forums
- February/March – public hearing with Redevelopment Board

The Chair thanked Ms. Kelleher and the Working Group for the amount of work they've put into this proposal.

Mr. Lau asked if they have identified how many 20,000 square-foot or larger parcels are available which could support projects of the necessary size. Ms. Kelleher said that they are working on a map, but she thinks there are 30-40 such parcels. Mr. Lau thinks that many of the questions raised by Town Meeting Members will require detailed information about exactly what parcels are available.

Mr. Lau noted that the Board is considering rezoning some areas currently zoned as residential as open space. How would such rezoning affect the Safe Harbor clause which considers Town land area rather than number of units in the calculation of whether 40B projects can be blocked? Ms. Kelleher said that that probably needs to be calculated by a consultant, because it's very technical. She also noted that the Town has expressed support for affordable housing regardless of whether it meets the requirements about currently available housing, so the Working Group wants to move forward regardless.

Mr. Lau also said that he supports the reduction in parking minimums.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that she would encourage the Working Group to consider smaller, if any, requirements for commercial space, which is very difficult to finance. Having the option for commercial space in commercial districts is a good idea, as is making community space available to the broader public.

Ms. Korman-Houston asked how developments under this proposal would be different from 40B projects, and what would make using this process more attractive to a developer than going the 40B route. Ms. Kelleher replied that the purpose of this proposal is to make this type of large affordable housing development possible as of right, without going through the time and expense of a 40B process. Ms. Korman-Houston would like more information about what the permitting process will ultimately look like.

Mr. Benson asked why the proposal includes different parking requirements for developments in residential versus commercial districts. Ms. Kelleher replied that commercial districts tend to be transit accessible and therefore development in those areas would require less parking. Mr. Benson pointed out that much of Mass Ave is zoned residential, so he thinks that using residential versus commercial zoning is not the right way to go about determining the different sets of parking requirements. He suggested using a particular distance from a bus stop as the trigger for which different parking requirements. However, Mr. Benson said that he would not agree to a zoning overlay which did not require any parking. He thinks a half space per unit might be workable, but as long as the Town does not allow overnight on-street parking, he can't support any zoning which requires no parking at all.

Mr. Benson said that he's not sure about having the overlay include the industrial district. But before he can be sure one way or another, he would need to see which parcels the Working Group is talking about. His impression is that many of the larger parcels are in the business districts, and he wants a clearer sense of what might be lost in terms of commercial space if those parcels are included in the affordable housing overlay. The overlay will ultimately need to balance the need for affordable housing with the need for commercial development and for open space, and the Board can't get a sense of that balance without seeing a map showing all the parcels that are large enough to be included. He wondered about the possibility of putting the overlay specifically on the large parcels, versus the entire town, so that it's clearer what development could actually happen.

Mr. Benson also said that he thinks that the Board needs to consider how to incorporate Site Plan Review. Even for as-of-right construction, the Board wants the right to review and weigh in on plans.

Mr. Benson said that he does not think that two public meetings are enough to get an affordable housing overlay through Town Meeting. Compared to the MBTA Communities Working Group and its process, the Affordable Housing Working Group's process is much more compressed.

Mr. Benson also noted that if any of the large-enough parcels are in a flood zone, the Working Group will have to consider the other building requirements that kick in for a flood zone, and how to accommodate those.

Mr. Revilak responded to several Board members' questions and concerns:

- Mr. Lau's concern about General Land Area Measurement in 40B regulations – the Working Group did not assume that any affordable housing would be developed in cemeteries or parks. He acknowledged that rezoning parcels currently zoned as residential as open space will change the overall calculations.
- Ms. Korman-Houston's question about the difference between the permitting process in the proposed overlay district and the 40B process – the proposed new process is intended to be more straightforward. Cambridge has an affordable housing overlay, and in its first year, they put over 300 units in the development pipeline, so it was successful. The 40B process does allow for the possibility of negotiating and requesting waivers, which the new process would not.
- Ms. Korman-Houston's concern about commercial space – if commercial space is required, it is generally not eligible for state and federal subsidies, unless it is a community service organization. The Working Group only proposed a commercial requirement in business districts, and possibly writing a definition that would include organizations that would be eligible for subsidies. (Arlington EATS is an example of an organization that would be eligible for subsidies, because it is a food pantry, but it also has a small grocery store so functions in some ways as commercial space.)
- Mr. Benson's concern about flood zones – we should be building with first floor elevations based on storm surge/sea level rise models.
- MBTA Communities – Many people were upset that MBTA Communities did not provide more affordable housing, but it was never intended to be an affordable housing initiative. This proposed overlay is attempting to address what many felt were the missing pieces of the MBTA Communities process.

The Chair also cannot support bringing a parking requirement down to zero unless the Town allows for overnight on-street parking. She would like to have a joint meeting with the Select Board in order to help them understand how impactful the issue of parking is on housing in general and affordable housing in particular.

The Chair also thinks that it is incredibly important to include a first-floor commercial requirement for developments in the business district. Arlington has such small business districts and such a need for well-developed commercial space. Understanding where the parcels are is important for knowing how to deal with the issue of commercial space. Community use organizations on the first floor are a good option if they contribute to the activation of pedestrian life along Mass Ave and Broadway.

The Chair thinks that the Board needs a clearer understanding of the permitting and review process. She is uncomfortable with as of right development without a clear and robust review process.

The Chair is also concerned about the time frame of trying to take this proposal to 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Even with a year spent on MBTA Communities, many felt that it was too rushed. There are a number of questions that need to be discussed at greater length – parking, commercial space, the extent of the overlay, etc. Mr. Benson expressed concern about what happens if the Board sees the final wording of the main motion just before it has to be filed and has problems with it. He thinks that the Board needs at least a month to consider the main motion before voting on it.

Mr. Lau said that seeing a map of the potential parcels as soon as possible is critical – all the details will follow from that. Ms. Kelleher said that would be available soon.

Home Occupation:

Resident James Fleming presented his proposed warrant article amending the zoning bylaw regarding a business run from a home.

Starting a business in a commercial space can be difficult and expensive, and can be quite a risky proposition for business-owners still experimenting with what works. Arlington is more restrictive than other neighboring town in terms of what it allows relating to a home-run business.

His proposal takes language from neighboring towns and would allow:

- Up to two non-resident employees
- 33% of a home's square footage used in the business
- One small non-illuminated sign
- More specific use and traffic restrictions
- Sales of home-produced goods allowed on premises
- Up to three customers/students/pupils
- Restricting the number of deliveries and/or customers to no more than 10 per day

The proposal also addresses home offices and professional uses, which are currently explicitly disallowed under Arlington's zoning bylaws. Many people already work from home without knowing it's not allowed, and it causes no issues for anyone outside the house.

Resident Vincent Baudoin also spoke in favor of the proposal. The pandemic obviously increased the number of people working from home. He addressed the question of how businesses start. People starting businesses often can't afford to sign leases, and it doesn't make sense to do so until a business has had some success and gotten some revenue. Prior to the pandemic, approximately half of US businesses were home-based, so anything Arlington can do to increase flexibility and allow people to start businesses at home would be positive.

Mr. Revilak agreed that Arlington should be more flexible. The current bylaw doesn't even consider telecommuting. It would also be extremely difficult to enforce. He is in favor of a modernization.

Mr. Benson doesn't think that the current bylaw prohibits working from home, although it could be rewritten to make it clearer. He also pointed out that many homes are in the business districts, and businesses can be run out of those homes. He agrees that it would be good to update the bylaw, but he is not sure about selling things out of houses. He doesn't think that restricting the number of deliveries and/or customers per day is enforceable, and he doesn't like bylaws that can't be enforced. If someone is very successful at selling their products, there could be constant turnover of cars outside their residence throughout the day, with no good way for the Town to prevent that.

Ms. Korman-Houston agrees that updating the bylaw makes sense. She disagrees that allowing home businesses only in the business district is sufficient. Her primary concern is traffic; it would be challenging to pin down an appropriate number and to enforce.

Mr. Lau thinks that the definition needs to be more focused on what exactly the type of business is, rather than all the accessory requirements about signs, traffic, etc. Mr. Fleming responded that this proposal would not overwrite the current use restrictions and allowances.

The Chair noted that co-working spaces can alleviate some of the issues Mr. Fleming raised about the difficulty of starting a business. She does not think there's much of a call for these changes. Updating the zoning bylaw is not a short and simple process, and they typically try to do it when there is a meaningful reason and demonstrated need. If Mr. Fleming has evidence to show the need, then it's worth the Board taking the time to sort out all the necessary details.

Mr. Lau asked if they have considered the issues of taxes and insurance. Mr. Baudoin said that they are only proposing a zoning change, so it doesn't change anything about how taxes work.

Mr. Benson said that he would be in favor of modifying the definition of home occupation to make it clearer what is allowed. The Board would have to look at use tables and figure out how to mesh them with the bylaw amendments.

Attached Single-Family Homes:

Mr. Fleming introduced the proposal about Attached Single Family Homes, which are distinct from two-family homes in that the property line divides the homes, so they exist on two separate parcels but share a party wall. This is not currently allowed as a building type, but there are exceptions for buildings pre-existing the 1970s bylaws.

This proposal would allow such building by right. It is currently very difficult for the owners of such buildings to plan additions or renovations, because this building type is not included in the use tables in the bylaw. It would also simplify ownership because it would not require a condo agreement, since a clear property line exists, unlike in two-family homes on single lots.

This building type would only be allowed in R2 and up zoning. The only necessary changes would be add this type of building to use tables and make changes to dimensional constraints for that use, particularly related to lot size.

Mr. Lau said that he is unsure about why this change is needed. He asked if Mr. Fleming and Mr. Baudoin have spoken to Mike Ciampa, Director of the Inspectional Services Department, to find out if this has been an issue for ISD in terms of knowing why bylaws to apply in order to approve building permits. They have not spoken to Mr. Ciampa.

Mr. Benson said that this change would allow someone to buy a 6,000-square-foot lot and build two attached single-family homes on it, sharing a party wall, and subdivide it into two 3,000-square-foot lots. If the proposal enables that to happen, then it is not simply getting rid of exceptions; it is allowing this use elsewhere. The exceptions are written into the bylaw and can be dealt with accordingly, so there's no need to get rid of them.

Mr. Revilak said that he lives in such a property, and it has worked out well as an ownership model. He noted that when a 6,000 square-foot lot is subdivided, the two 3,000 square-foot lots assess at a higher combined value than the single 6,000 square-foot lot. He does not think that this would result in different types of buildings being built, because a side-by-side duplex on 6,000 square feet looks the same as two attached single families each on 3,000 square feet. The difference would be solely in ownership structure.

The Chair moved to Agenda Item 4 – Redevelopment Board Warrant Articles.

Ms. Ricker said that the Board had previously asked David Morgan, Environmental Planner, for a map of the parcels that would be affected by the proposal he made at the Board's December 18 meeting about open space rezoning. He has provided this map, which Ms. Ricker shared with the Board. The Chair noted that at the December 18 meeting, the Board thought that more work would need to be done on the proposal before it could come before Town Meeting, and that they should designate a Board member to work with Mr. Morgan on the proposal. Mr. Benson said that he would be happy to work with Mr. Morgan, but it will not be done in time for 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Ricker shared a list of likely Board Warrant Articles for 2024 Annual Town Meeting:

- Elimination of Section 5.8, Inland Wetland District, supported by multiple Town departments.
- Revision of Section 5.3.19, Reduced Height Buffer.
- Clarification of the definitions of “attached” and “detached” in the zoning bylaw.
- Elimination or clarification of Section 5.3.10, so as not to distinguish between vacant and non-vacant properties in terms of setback requirements.
- Editing Section 5.9.2 to eliminate bullets and have each point labelled with a unique identifier, such as a letter or number.
- Amending Section 5.9.2.B (1), bullet 5, to clarify whether or not new ADUs may be constructed within six feet of the property line with a special permit from the ZBA.

Mr. Benson and Mr. Revilak said that they had discussed including Residential Transportation Demand Management plans, but that will probably need to wait for 2025.

Mr. Benson met with Christian Klein, Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Pat Hanlon, and Mike Ciampa, Director of ISD, and they discussed the proposed articles.

- They agreed on how to change the definitions of “attached” and “detached,” and Mr. Benson wrote a draft based on the discussion. The proposed change would define “attached” as structures sharing a wall and/or a roof, and define “detached” as anything not attached.
- Mr. Ciampa had shared how ISD has interpreted the word “vacant” in Section 5.3.10. If a building and foundation are removed, the lot becomes a vacant lot; at that point, new development can take advantage of the average setback on the street. After discussion, the group decided that there’s no need to change the bylaw.
- The bullet points in Section 5.9.2 will be changed to numbers. A provision in that section that only applied for the first year it was in effect can also now be eliminated.
- A reference will be added to 5.4.2.A to reference the other exception.

The Chair noted that the Board would address residential parking for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Ricker asked if the Board has draft language related to the reduced height buffer. Mr. Benson replied that he would see what has been written and share it with the Board.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 5 – Warrant Article Hearings.**

Ms. Ricker noted that the Board will need to review and finalize which articles they intend to submit to the warrant at their January 22 meeting. The warrant then closes on January 26. Due to legal notice requirements, March 4 is the earliest possible meeting for public hearings.

The Chair noted that the Board should set aside two meetings for hearings, given that there may be other citizen petitions they are not aware of. They will also need a meeting to discuss and vote on all the proposed articles, and they will need a meeting to review and approve the Board Report. She asked Ms. Ricker to find out by what date the Report needs to be submitted. Ms. Ricker said that she would propose a schedule at the January 22 meeting to accommodate all these items.

Annual Town Meeting is required to be officially opened on April 22, 2024, but that is Passover. The Town Moderator will likely open and immediately adjourn the meeting, and then the business will begin on April 24, 2024.

Mr. Benson said that if the MBTA Communities Overlay District is approved by EOHLC and the AG’s Office, the Board will have to schedule a hearing to amend the Board’s Rules and Regulations regarding Site Plan Review. They will also need a hearing about amending the conditions for administrative review of signs.

Mr. Benson finished a draft of Site Plan Review. He would like to meet with Ms. Ricker to finalize that draft, and then it will be sent to the rest of the Board.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 6 – Arlington Heights Business District.**

Ms. Ricker put together a rough timeline for outreach and adoption of the Arlington Heights Business District. The Board needs to re-engage with the public before bringing this to Town Meeting.

- January 15 – The monthly DPCD update with ACMi will include an explanation of the outreach process and timeline, as well as a review of the recommendations in the Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan.
- January 18 – Ms. Ricker will meet with Arlington Heights Business Association to let them know that DPCD is again engaging in this process and to find out what has changed since 2019, when the Action Plan was released.
- May 9 – public community meeting.
- Early September – report to Board with the outcome of the community outreach.
- January 2025 – the warrant article language is finalized.

The Chair said that the Chamber of Commerce and the Arlington Heights Community Association should be included in the public outreach. She recommended re-engaging with the Arlington Heights Action Plan Implementation Committee.

Mr. Lau said that he would like to approach the MBTA about the Arlington Heights bus turnaround and the bike path, which is MBTA property and can be difficult for the Town to work with.

Both the Chair and Mr. Lau proposed having booths at multiple Arlington Heights community events to share information with the community.

Mr. Benson said that the schedule should include a date in November or December 2024 at which the Board reviews possible drafts, before finalizing the language in January 2025.

The Chair said that it needs to be determined who will do the work of writing the language of the warrant article – it could be DPCD, or a revitalized version of the Arlington Heights Action Plan Implementation Committee.

Mr. Revilak said the Town needs to consider an outreach budget. Postcards are useful for notifying the community of plans and meetings, but funds need to be set aside.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 7 – Open Forum.**

- Vincent Baudoin, 56 Silk Street – What are the pros and cons of folding other business districts, such as Capitol Square, into the same timeline and process for public outreach?

The Chair replied that the Board has discussed whether they want to look at the business districts sequentially or all at the same time. Each of the business districts has such unique challenges and opportunities that the Board decided to address them one at a time. But it is important to engage the East and Central business communities and let them know what's going on with the process in the Heights.

- Susan Stamps, 39 Grafton Street, Green Streets Arlington – Green Streets Arlington brought a proposal about zoning relating to parking lots to the December 18 meeting. Since then, they have been working with Mr. Benson on scaling back on the proposal. They now propose amending Section 6.1.11.D(6), which currently requires that parking lots with more than 25 spaces include landscaped areas in at least 8% of the total paved portion. The new proposal would change that to 50% shade cover and would require trees or solar panels. They do feel strongly that Arlington needs to do anything it can to mitigate the effects of climate change, which are particularly evident in the extreme heat caused by parking lots. She hopes that the Board will help Green Streets Arlington to develop this warrant article and will support it.

Mr. Lau asked what would trigger the new requirements under the amendment. Would basic repair and maintenance require them to add shade cover? Ms. Stamps said that they are not yet sure, but they are working on determining that as part of writing the main motion.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 8 – New Business.**

Mr. Revilak shared that the Boston Squares and Streets Zoning Initiative uses different language relating to open space than Arlington does, which might be helpful in eliminating some of the current confusion about what exactly open space is. Private outdoor space that is open to the sky and accessible to members of the public is called “public open space.” Other portions of the parcel that are not open to the public, such as backyards, balconies, and rooftops, are called “amenity space.” Their use table has a whole section called “Active Uses,” which might be relevant to Arlington in thinking about what sorts of commercial uses are allowed in mixed-use developments.

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lau so moved, and Mr. Benson seconded. The Board voted and approved unanimously.

Meeting **Adjourned at 10:20 pm.**

DRAFT

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, January 22, 2024, at 7:30 PM
Community Center, Main Hall
27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Rachel Zsembery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Shaina Korman-Houston, Kin Lau, Stephen Revilak

STAFF: Claire Ricker, Director of Planning and Community Development; Sarah Suarez, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development

The Chair called the meeting of the Board to order.

The Chair opened with **Agenda Item 1 – Review Meeting Minutes.**

December 18, 2023 – The Chair and Mr. Lau each had one edit to the minutes. The Chair requested a motion to approve the December 18 minutes as amended. Mr. Lau so moved, Mr. Benson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 2 – Citizen Warrant Articles.**

Ms. Ricker said that two residents are proposing Citizen Warrant Articles.

3-Family Everywhere:

Ms. Ricker introduced residents John Paul Lewicke (104 Bay State Road, Precinct 2) and Annie LaCourt (48 Chatham Street, Precinct 13), who presented a proposal for a warrant article to allow two- and three-family dwellings by-right throughout Arlington. Mr. Lewicke said that during the MBTA Communities process, one of the suggestions for bringing more multi-family housing to Arlington was to allow two- and/or three-family housing by-right throughout Arlington. They are in touch with Town Counsel about the voting threshold that would be required at Town Meeting for a two-family versus a three-family proposal, so they are not yet sure what the final proposal will be. The goal is to address the housing shortage, but to do so without disrupting the character of the neighborhoods of Arlington. This proposal keeps the current dimensional requirements in place, which would help maintain that character. Height limits, floor limits, and setbacks would remain the same. Ms. LaCourt has sent the proposed language of the warrant article to Town Counsel for feedback and has not yet heard back. The proposal would apply to R0, R1, and R2 districts and would add two-family dwelling/duplex and/or three-family dwelling as allowable uses in Section 5.4.3. It would also involve some definition changes and use table changes in Sections 5.4.1.A and 5.4.2.A. The proposal has not been finalized, and there are questions they would like the Board's feedback on: Should the R3 district also be changed to allow as-of-right three-family dwellings (as opposed to three-family only with a Special Permit, as is currently the case)? How should properties with existing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) be handled?

Mr. Revilak said that if they want to include the R3 district, they would need to rewrite the warrant article language. He also noted that the R3 through R7 districts comprise a very small land area, so it makes more sense to focus on R0, R1, and R2. Mr. Revilak also noted that ADUs are allowed in all residential and business districts, in conjunction with a single- or two-family dwelling. If someone has a two-family dwelling with an ADU, they could not convert to a three-family without getting rid of the ADU, but a single-family with an ADU could be converted to a two-family.

Mr. Benson noted that they referred to the article as "Three-Family Everywhere" and asked for clarification about whether they meant all districts in town, or just the R0, R1, and R2 districts. Ms. LaCourt clarified that they only intended to amend the bylaws regarding R0, R1, and R2. He also expressed concern that two- and three-family homes would not look like single-family homes and therefore would not fit with the neighborhood. He noted that new development in the MBTA Communities Overlay District requires Site Plan Review, and he thinks that

development under this proposal should as well. If the proposal includes Site Plan Review, he would be in favor of including the R3 district and removing the Special Permit requirement there, so as to be consistent.

Mr. Benson noted that, as Mr. Lewicke pointed out, the idea of allow three-family homes in all residential districts was considered as part of the MBTA Communities process, but it was not an idea that was ultimately included and passed by Town Meeting. He thinks that it may be too soon after MBTA Communities to propose a new idea taking the changes already made further. If they wait a couple of years and see what effect MBTA Communities has, especially if not many new multi-family homes are actually being built, they might have a stronger case as to why this change would be important. He also said that including some sort of projection about what changes are actually likely to take place in a specific time period would be useful in terms of presenting this idea to Town Meeting.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that she would also be interested to hear an analysis of potential anticipated development. She thinks that conversions of one- or two-family homes into three-family homes are more likely than tear-downs and new development. They would need to consider whether Site Plan Review is required if the envelope of the building is not being changed. She raised the question of parking. One of the common concerns with MBTA Communities was people paving over and parking in the front yard and having very wide driveways, which would also be a concern with increasing density in other neighborhoods. Mr. Lewicke said that they would not plan to change the bylaw requirement of at least one space per unit, or the current limitations on the size of driveways.

Mr. Lau pointed out that this proposal would result in smaller living units. He asked if they have considered the effect that would have on the living space in average-sized houses. It would require more doors, possible more sets of stairs as egress. He also asked them to consider the cost and affordability of such units. He said they need to think through the details of what effects it would have and what it would look like to the community. Mr. Lewicke said they plan to do more work on thinking through the ramifications so they have a more comprehensive proposal for Town Meeting. He also noted that multi-bedroom single-family homes would likely be converted to two- or three-unit apartments with fewer bedrooms. If that happens quite a bit, the character of a neighborhood which is currently family-oriented could change, with fewer units large enough for families available.

Mr. Lau also noted that how the language is formulated will make a big difference in what it would require to pass it at Town Meeting. In general, zoning changes require a 2/3 vote, but zoning changes that allow multi-family housing (defined as three or more units) only require a simple majority. Ms. LaCourt said that they are aware of that, and they are trying to figure out will work best.

The Chair asked for a clarification; if Town Counsel says that proposing two- and three-family would not meet the requirement for a simple majority, would their intent be to have an article which solely allowed three-families, or would they continue with two- and three-families and work for a 2/3-vote. Ms. LaCourt thinks they would have a good chance of winning a simple majority, but not a super-majority. If they cannot include two-families, they will have to decide between moving forward with three-families or waiting and trying to make some version of this happen at some point in the future. They will only move forward with three-families if they feel that really makes sense from a zoning perspective, which they hope the Board will advise them on. The Chair said that she would not feel comfortable supporting a proposal only allowing three-family homes; it doesn't make sense to skip over two-family homes because of the structure of the vote required.

Mr. Benson and Mr. Revilak both agreed that it would make not make sense to allow one- and three-family homes but not two-family homes, and said that they would not support a proposal that did not allow for two-family homes.

The Chair also said that holding precinct meetings and speaking with people in the neighborhoods will be very important. If this warrant article moves forward, it will have a lot of interest, and it is important to bring as many different people into the conversation as possible. Mr. Lewicke said that they both believe a public process is important, and they would appreciate any guidance the Board has about how to best make that happen. The Chair said that with a citizen petition, while the Board and DPCD can advise and support, the work falls to the people presenting the petition.

Mr. Benson suggested that they talk to the Assessor's Office about the tax implications. Would a single-family home be assessed at a higher or lower value than a two- or three-family home in the same exterior size? Whether a multi-family property would bring in more taxes as it brings in more people is an important consideration. 15 of 68

Rear Setbacks in Business Districts:

Ms. Ricker introduced Andy Greenspon (89 Palmer St, Precinct 5), who presented a proposal for a warrant article about rear setbacks in business districts. His understanding of the current bylaws is that a three-story building in a Business District that abuts a Residential District must have a 20-foot setback, and a four-story building must have a 30-foot setback. This proposal would change that so that adding a four-story building must have a 20-foot setback, with an additional 10-foot step back on the fourth story, so only the fourth story would need to be a total of 30 feet from the property line. Given the small parcel sizes in Arlington, having to decrease the depth of a building by 10 more feet on the first three stories to build a fourth story may make the development less useful or financially viable. Somerville's zoning code is similar to this proposal.

Mr. Lau agreed that it does not make sense to reduce the entire building by 10 feet for adding a fourth story. He supports the proposal.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that she was also supportive. She wondered if front step-back requirements would mean that fourth floors would be squeezed on both the front and the back.

Mr. Benson said that this proposal might require changing the definition of "setback" in the zoning bylaws so the language is consistent. Mr. Greenspon responded that he is not sure how consistent the use of "setback" and "step-back" is in the bylaw currently, and he is happy to use whatever language the Board or Town Counsel suggests.

Mr. Benson also noted that four-story buildings are required to apply to the Board for a Special Permit, and the Board is already authorized to allow development with smaller setbacks. As a result, it may not be necessary to make this change to the bylaw itself, but it's worth thinking about. Mr. Greenspon responded that it would still be useful to have this change in the bylaw as a baseline, because a developer might look at the bylaw and decide that a fourth story is not economically feasible without ever going to the Board to seek relief.

Mr. Benson asked how it would apply to buildings taller than four buildings. Mr. Greenspon said that this change would apply to stories four and above.

Mr. Revilak said that he is also supportive of this proposal.

Mr. Benson agreed to work with Mr. Greenspon on the wording of the warrant article and main motion to make sure that it would be consistent with current zoning bylaw definitions.

The Chair moved to Agenda Item 3 – Redevelopment Board Warrant Articles.

Ms. Ricker shared information about four of the warrant articles the Board plans to submit to 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Three of those were suggested by the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board has already discussed them. The Board has access to the draft language of the main motion for those articles, written by Mr. Benson. Those articles are: Building Definitions (defining "attached" and "detached") and two Administrative Clarifications, regarding Sections 5.4.2.A. and 5.9.2. The fourth warrant article is the Reduced Height Buffer Area, which the Board has not yet discussed. The Board has access to a draft written by former DPCD Assistant Director Kelly Lynema, along with proposed edits by Mr. Benson.

The Chair noted that the Board also planned to submit a warrant article regarding the elimination of the Inland Wetland District. Ms. Ricker said that the draft language for the main motion of that article is not available at this time.

The Chair opened discussion on the warrant article regarding Building Definitions. The Board members had no changes to propose. Mr. Benson said that he discussed the proposed language with Mike Ciampa, Director of the Inspectional Services Department, and Christian Klein, Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, who both agreed with the proposed language.

The Chair opened discussion on the warrant article proposing Administrative Clarification to Section 5.4.2.A. Mr. Benson noted that the word "Bylaw" had accidentally been omitted and should be added to the warrant language. The Board members had no further changes to propose.

The Chair opened discussion on the warrant article proposing Administrative Clarification to Section 5.9.2. The Board members had no changes to propose.

The Chair opened discussion on the warrant article regarding the elimination of the Inland Wetland Overlay District. The Chair noted that the words "Zoning Bylaw" should be capitalized. Mr. Revilak noted that a semicolon should be added before the final phrase, "or take any action related thereto." Ms. Ricker asked if the phrase "as it is redundant to the Wetland Protection Act jurisdictional area governed by the Conservation Commission" should be removed, and the Chair said that it should, as wording to that effect will be added to the language of the main motion. Mr. Benson noted that eliminating the section will require the renumbering of subsequent sections, and that should be added to the warrant article.

The Chair opened discussion on the warrant article regarding the Reduced Height Buffer Area. Mr. Benson proposed the following language for the warrant article: "To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 5.3.19. Reduced Height Buffer Area in the Zoning Bylaw to alter the height buffer area requirements; or take any action related thereto." That language would allow the Board flexibility in writing the main motion, given that they have not yet discussed any of the details. The other Board members agreed.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve and submit the warrant articles as discussed. Mr. Benson so moved, and Mr. Lau seconded. The Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 4 – Warrant Article Hearings.**

Ms. Ricker proposed the following schedule for hearings on warrant articles:

- February 26 – Hearing #1, on the five warrant articles just discussed.
- March 4 and March 11 (if necessary) – Hearing #2, on the Citizen Petition warrant articles.
- March 18 – Hearing #3, on Affordable Housing Overlay. This hearing will require a town-wide postcard notice and is likely to create a great deal of community interest. The hearing could be held in the Town Hall Auditorium to allow more members of the community to attend.
- Deliberation and Vote on all warrant articles – Monday, April 1.
- Vote to approve Board Report to Town Meeting – Monday, April 8.

The Chair noted that holding the first hearing on February 26 would require the Board to have a substantive discussion of the Reduced Height Buffer Area at the Board's previous meeting, on February 5, in order to have the language of the main motion ready for the hearing. She also noted that the Conservation Commission would need to have the language of the main motion of the article to eliminate the Inland Wetland Overlay District ready for the February 26 meeting, as well as any additional materials.

The Chair said that she was concerned about the Affordable Housing Overlay warrant article going to 2024 Town Meeting, because she does not feel there has been enough of a public process. But the decision of whether to submit the article rests with the Affordable Housing Working Group which proposed it, not with the Board.

Mr. Lau expressed concern that the Board's schedule not be completely taken up with the warrant article hearings between now and Town Meeting. He asked if these meetings would allow time to hear Special Permit applications as well. The Chair replied that in the past, the Board has held Special Permit hearings and warrant article hearings at the same meeting. Ms. Ricker said that she would note on the schedule that space should be held open for Special Permit hearings.

Mr. Benson noted that the warrant article proposed at this meeting to allow 2- and 3-family homes in the R0, R1, and R2 districts might also get a lot of public interest, and that hearing should perhaps also be held in Town Hall Auditorium. The Chair suggested holding that hearing and the Affordable Housing Overlay hearing on the same night, allowing them each 90 minutes, both in the auditorium.

Mr. Benson noted that when David Morgan and Chuck Tirone presented the proposal for eliminating the Inland Wetland Overlay District on December 18, 2023, the Board asked for follow-up information which they have not received. Ms. Ricker said that she would follow up.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 5 – Review of Draft Changes to Rules and Regulations.**

Ms. Ricker shared that she circulated a change to Rule 20 of the Board's Rules and Regulations, to add details about Site Plan Review, drafted by Mr. Benson. The Board must advertise and hold a public meeting to change the Rules and Regulations, so the Board cannot vote to make any changes at this meeting, but they can discuss it.

Mr. Benson shared some of the sources he used in creating the draft. He noted a number of points for the Board to discuss:

- The draft says that a pre-application meeting is required, but he wondered if that should be optional for small projects, such as four or fewer units on side streets.
- The first draft said that developers could not file their applications until they got approval of their affordable housing proposal. He proposed changing that to require a letter from either DPCD or the Affordable Housing Trust saying that their affordable housing proposal is satisfactory.
- He noted that the schedule and timeline of the Site Plan Review process is mostly identical to the Special Application process for Environmental Design Review.

Mr. Revilak proposed three clerical changes, noted by Mr. Benson and Ms. Ricker for correction. He also noted that Section 20.D, about the fact that approval will lapse after three years, does not include two exceptions found in the corresponding Section about EDR (3.3.5.B). He proposed an amendment that would use the language from 3.3.5.B, including those two exceptions.

Ms. Korman-Houston expressed concern about the timeline proposed in 20.D, which she felt was potentially onerous for developers. She is also concerned that the Site Plan Review is too robust for as-of-right development. She does not think that it necessarily makes sense to require review of items such as landscaping and design for as-of-right development that meetings zoning codes.

The Chair noted that in Section A, the Site Plan Review is defined as specifically applying to developments within a Multi-Family Overlay District. The Board has discussed the possibility of using Site Plan Review more broadly in the future, so she thought it might make sense to broaden the language so that Site Plan Review can be used for other types of developments in the future without requiring another change to the Board's Rules and Regulations. She proposed saying that Site Plan Review would be applicable where identified in the Zoning Bylaw. Mr. Benson agreed.

The Chair also wondered if the Rules and Regulations should include anything about the types of documentation required for the bonus height provisions. Those requirements are covered in the Zoning Bylaw, and it says that they are subject to review by the Redevelopment Board, but the Board may want to consider some reference to that in its own Rules and Regulations. Mr. Benson said that this sort of detail would be included in the application.

The Chair was pleased to see that design review would be part of Site Plan Review. When the Board agreed to support the MBTA Communities plan, it was with the provision that design review would be required. The Board has been committed to making sure that new developments would be in alignment with the existing look and feel of the town.

Mr. Lau asked what the expectations of information to be provided at the Pre-Application meeting would be – would developers be required to submit formal drawings? Mr. Benson replied that the Site Plan Review Application (not required until after the Pre-Application meeting) would include exactly what those requirements are, but the details of the Site Plan Review Application have not been written yet. He pointed out that it would be preferable to have all the details included in the application, but not in the Rules and Regulations, because the application can be modified in the future without a public hearing of the Board.

Mr. Benson noted that the draft states that the approval of Site Plan Review requires a simple majority of the Board (three out of five votes), not a supermajority (four out of five votes).

Mr. Benson addressed Ms. Korman-Houston's concern about the timeline. He noted that Site Plan Review requires the same sort of notifications as Environmental Design Review, which includes public notification that takes a significant amount of time.

Mr. Benson said that the other potential change to the Board's Rules and Regulations, about allowing staff more discretion for administrative approval of signs, would be on the agenda of the next meeting, and they will hopefully be considered at the same public hearing.

Mr. Benson asked whether Ms. Ricker thought that the Pre-Application meeting should be mandatory for all projects. She replied that her recommendation would be that it be mandatory for projects over four units. The Board members agreed.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 6 – Open Forum.**

The Chair opened the floor for public comment. Seeing no one who wished to speak, the Chair closed Open Forum.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 7 – New Business.**

Ms. Ricker shared with the Board an updated rendering provided by the developer of 882 Mass Ave. She said that the architect is looking at an alternate type of vent, but she has not yet received any specific information. Mr. Lau noted that the rendering does not show the change he asked for, regarding the way the paint is changed at the corners. The Chair said that the band of color underneath the cornices needs to be changed. Mr. Lau said that he wants to see a 3-D model, not a photo that's been touched-up, which is what they provided. He does not think that the architect actually worked on the rendering. He also said that he wants to see the specs for the paint they plan to use. Ms. Ricker said that the developer is aware of that and will submit it.

Mr. Benson said that he was contacted by a resident who said that the smaller-sized units had not been approved by EOHLC to be used as affordable housing. Ms. Ricker responded that the resident had also reached out to EOHLC, and at the time, EOHLC did not have the regulatory agreement with Arlington, but that agreement has since been sent to the Town for signature. She thinks that the units are in the process of being approved. Ms. Korman-Houston asked for confirmation that the regulatory agreement is based on the actual size of the units as built, not as originally proposed. Mr. Benson said that if all the units are smaller than 700 square feet, which is usually the minimum required for affordable housing, he thinks that the larger units should be the ones set aside as affordable. Ms. Korman-Houston responded that the affordable housing units are of average size, which is an acceptable approach to making them comparable to the market-rate units.

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lau so moved, and Mr. Benson seconded. The Board voted and approved unanimously.

Meeting **Adjourned at 9:20 pm.**



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Board Rules and Regulations

Summary:

7:40 pm The Board will discuss proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations with regard to administrative review of signage proposals.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▢ Reference Material	DRAFT_Revised_Rules_and_Regs_-_Admin_Approval_of_Signs_-_12112023.pdf	DRAFT Revised Rules and Regs - Admin Approval of Signs - 12112023

Administrative Approval of Signs
Proposed Revision of December 11, 2023

ARB Rules and Regulations

RULE 18: SIGN APPLICATIONS AND REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL

New signs and sign modifications that require a permanent sign permit as set forth in Section 6.2 of the Zoning Bylaw may be considered for administrative approval by the Director of Planning and Community Development provided the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Director that the following two criteria are met:

1. The sign(s) meet all zoning requirements, including but not limited to complying with all the applicable requirements for the signs as set forth in Section 6.2 of the Zoning Bylaw; and
2. There are no known zoning or general bylaw violations outstanding on the property.

If a sign proposal does not meet the two above criteria, the Director of Planning and Community Development may not approve the sign; instead, the applicant must submit a full application for the Redevelopment Board's review and approval.

The Department of Planning and Community Development is not required to provide administrative approval and may at any time refer a sign application to the Redevelopment Board. It shall refer the application to the Redevelopment Board if in the opinion of the Director of Planning and Community Development the sign is so unique, in such a prominent or important location, or would have such an effect on its immediate surroundings that review by the Redevelopment Board would be warranted.

Procedure: Submit a \$500 fee payable to the Town of Arlington and one copy of the following documents to the Department of Planning and Community Development

1. Photos of existing signs, if any, maintained on the premises;
2. Drawing of building facade indicating location of the proposed sign(s);
3. Drawing to scale of the proposed sign(s) with dimensions and construction specifications, materials, mounting method, lighting, and wiring;
4. Cut sheet for any lighting; and
5. Photo simulation, perspectives, renderings, or other representations sufficient to show the nature of the proposed sign(s) and its effect on the immediate surroundings.



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Design Guidelines

Summary:

8:00 pm The Board will discuss the Commercial Design Guidelines project and review existing Design Guidelines.

ATTACHMENTS:

	Type	File Name	Description
▢	Reference Material	Town_of_Arlington_Design_Standards.pdf	Town of Arlington Design Standards

DESIGN STANDARDS

FOR THE

TOWN OF ARLINGTON



Adopted October 19, 2015

architecture
urban design

GAMBLE
ASSOCIATES

23 of 68

PURPOSE

Arlington's Design Standards were created to enhance the economic vitality of the Town through attractive and consistent design. They have been created as an outgrowth of economic development goals identified in the **Arlington Master Plan** (adopted February, 2015) that seek to identify areas of "economic underutilization". These Design Standards are envisioned as a first step in updating the Zoning ByLaw, and they are tailored specifically to Arlington by focusing on the primary corridors unique to Arlington: Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway, the Mill Brook and the Minuteman Bikeway.

By increasing the build-out potential of commercial and industrial properties along these corridors, the Town can leverage economic development to enhance its tax base, improve access to transit and preserve and maintain Arlington's historic structures and cultural heritage. In this way, Arlington is directing its resources to areas with the greatest need and potential. **Collectively, these corridors function as "priority development areas" within Arlington, helping to focus growth in already developed areas, and diminish development pressures elsewhere in town.**

The Standards articulate fundamental principles that influence the character of buildings and their spaces. The intention of these Standards is to anticipate projects that accommodate a variety of uses and not to preclude them through land use regulation. Addressing building placement and orientation, height and setbacks, parking strategies and signage will help the town regulate form and clarify expectations for both developers and the public at large. By following these Standards, projects will complement one another, resulting in a cohesive public experience.

PREPARED FOR:

Town of Arlington
Dept. of Planning and Community Development
Town Hall, 730 Massachusetts Ave
Arlington, MA 02476
(781) 316-3090

PREPARED BY:

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Gamble Associates
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617-292-9912

COMMENTS/ QUESTIONS:

The Design Standards are intended to be a living document that will evolve over time with the changing needs of the Town. In that spirit, the document invites comments and perspectives that will inform the Town of Arlington as it updates and amends this work.

Comments on this document may be made to:
Carol Kowalski, Director of Planning
CKowalski@town.arlington.ma.us
Laura Wiener, Asst. Director of Planning
LWiener@town.arlington.ma.us
Dept. of Planning and Community Development
Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Ave
Arlington, MA 02476

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

WHAT ARE DESIGN STANDARDS?

These Design Standards are being developed to address the design of new buildings along the primary commercial and industrial areas in Arlington. They are intended to enhance the architecture, parking and public realm interface.

WHAT AREAS OF THE TOWN ARE IMPACTED BY THESE STANDARDS?

Arlington's Design Standards have been developed to provide direction for the design of new development and redevelopment in the commercial and industrial areas. The Standards focus on Mass Ave and Broadway, the Minuteman Bikeway, and the Mill Brook areas. While there is diversity in the character and density along these corridors, they will all experience development pressures in the future. These areas hold the greatest potential for pleasant transformation and their redevelopment will increase the Town's tax base.

HOW DO THESE DESIGN STANDARDS FIT INTO THE ARLINGTON MASTER PLAN?

One of the key Land Use recommendations in the Arlington Master Plan is to “adopt design guidelines for new and redeveloped commercial and industrial sites” (Page 11). The adoption of design guidelines was also recognized as a way to “promote development of higher value mixed use buildings ...” by “allowing applicants the ability to see what the Town envisions for their projects.”

DO DESIGN STANDARDS DICTATE STYLE?

They can, but they shouldn't. Arlington has a rich history that is reflected in the diversity of its architecture. Design standards should not advance a particular design aesthetic but rather encourage a variety of styles while still honoring classic and historic styles. **The goal of the Standards is not to limit creativity but rather recognize the potential for architectural diversity while adhering to overarching principles.** The Standards define expectations for new development while allowing for flexibility and fostering high quality design. Advancing singular design aesthetic is neither realistic nor desirable.

WHO WILL ENFORCE THESE DESIGN STANDARDS?

Design Standards are ultimately expected to become part of the Zoning Bylaw. When mixed use or other development is allowed by right, the Building Inspector enforces the design standards. In some communities a Design Review process or a Special Permit process is used to implement the design standards.

3 PRIMARY TOWN CORRIDORS

1 COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

2 MINUTEMAN BIKEWAY

3 MILL BROOK CORRIDOR



7 CATEGORIES

Arlington's location proximate to Boston, Cambridge, and other job and cultural centers - combined with its history, good schools and open space amenities - signal that it will be an attractive community for development. The Master Plan identified the primary corridors where development is best directed to enhance former industrial areas and enable the town to grow. These Design Standards identify seven concepts that can address aspects of new development and shape the form of the physical environment

1

BUILDING SETBACKS

The distance between a building and the street edge has everything to do with how a space feels. In areas with a lot of commercial activity, it is important to maintain a continuous street wall with modest or few building setbacks. Setbacks that do occur should be used for pocket parks, plazas, seating areas or landscape zones. The appropriate building setback is determined by the character and width of the street, the type of uses on the ground floor of the buildings and the amount of pedestrian activity. **Business districts are most vibrant when the sidewalk meets the streetwall with active ground floor uses.**

While aligning a building's elevation to the property line is most often the appropriate response for a building in a commercial center, there are instances where some spatial relief is necessary and a building setback should be included as part of a property's development. **Each of Arlington's three corridors necessitates a different building setback.** Building step-backs (different than setbacks) help to diminish the scale of building by moving a portion of the upper stories back from the facade. This is typically done at the third or fourth floors.

2

BUILDING HEIGHT

Height constitutes just one aspect of a building's massing but it is the most conspicuous. Heights in Arlington vary, with greater height reserved for civic buildings (like Town Hall), and places of worship. Heights are impacted by a variety of factors including the floor to floor dimensions, the type of construction, the topography of the site and the scale of the surrounding context. Surprisingly, the vast majority of the buildings along Massachusetts Avenue are just one or two stories.

Greater height in certain locations can be beneficial, and increased height in some areas can offset the need for building in other areas. The impact of height can be diminished when offset by the inclusion of an open space or a building step-back. A taller building will appear less tall when set back from the street edge. When concerns about density arise as a result of a building's height, the relationship of the building facade to the public right-of-way can have a greater impact than any other dimension. At the same time, what is deemed an appropriate height for a building is relative and depends largely on what is around it.

3

PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

The relationship of the building to the street and sidewalk plays an essential role in the ability of a development to enhance or detract from the public's experience. Commercial and mixed-use corridors are most successful when the street edge is defined with active ground floor uses and a high degree of transparency via glass windows. A vibrant public realm is essential for a successful community.

How a building relates to the public realm makes an enormous difference in the quality of the development and the degree to which the building contributes to public life. **While the massing of a building and its height, scale and orientation have a significant impact on one's impression of a place, the manner in which it meets the ground is the most critical.** Entrances and ground floor windows along the corridors should be at grade, easily accessible and aid in pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation.

4

PARKING + ACCESS

Parking is a primary consideration and its location on a site has an impact on the public experience. When parking is located in front of buildings, it often requires multiple curb-cuts resulting in an environment that favors parked vehicles at the expense of pedestrians, cyclists, and moving vehicles. Surface parking lots located in the front of commercial corridors sever the connection between the building and the public realm.

Parking is best located on the side, in back of, or under the building, and parking lots should be visually screened by trees and native plants. Consideration should be given to shared parking opportunities where day and night uses do not overlap to reduce the amount of space dedicated to parking. Alternate modes of transit should be encouraged. Development should take into account the pedestrian first, then the bicyclist, transit rider and then the driver.

5

CONNECTIONS + LINKAGES

The three corridors represent Arlington's primary locations for transportation, commerce, recreation, and social interaction. The inter-relationships between them are, therefore, essential. The corridors should not be viewed as separate lines, but rather as areas with perpendicular connections linking them together and to adjoining neighborhoods, open spaces and community assets. **The Design Standards are not intended to address the residential neighborhoods beyond these corridors where development pressures are also present.**

6

FACADE + MATERIALS

The character of a building depends on many factors: the proportion and orientation of doors and windows, the color, material and patterning of the exterior and the relationships between the parts of the project. Durable, high-quality materials will add a level of sophistication to a large and minimally detailed facade whereas inexpensive materials make a nicely-proportioned building look cheap. A building's elevation or facade says a lot about the character of the building. In terms of the cladding of a building, there is a direct connection between material choice and environmental stewardship. **Projects should be built with natural and sustainable materials that are durable and easy to maintain.**

7

SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

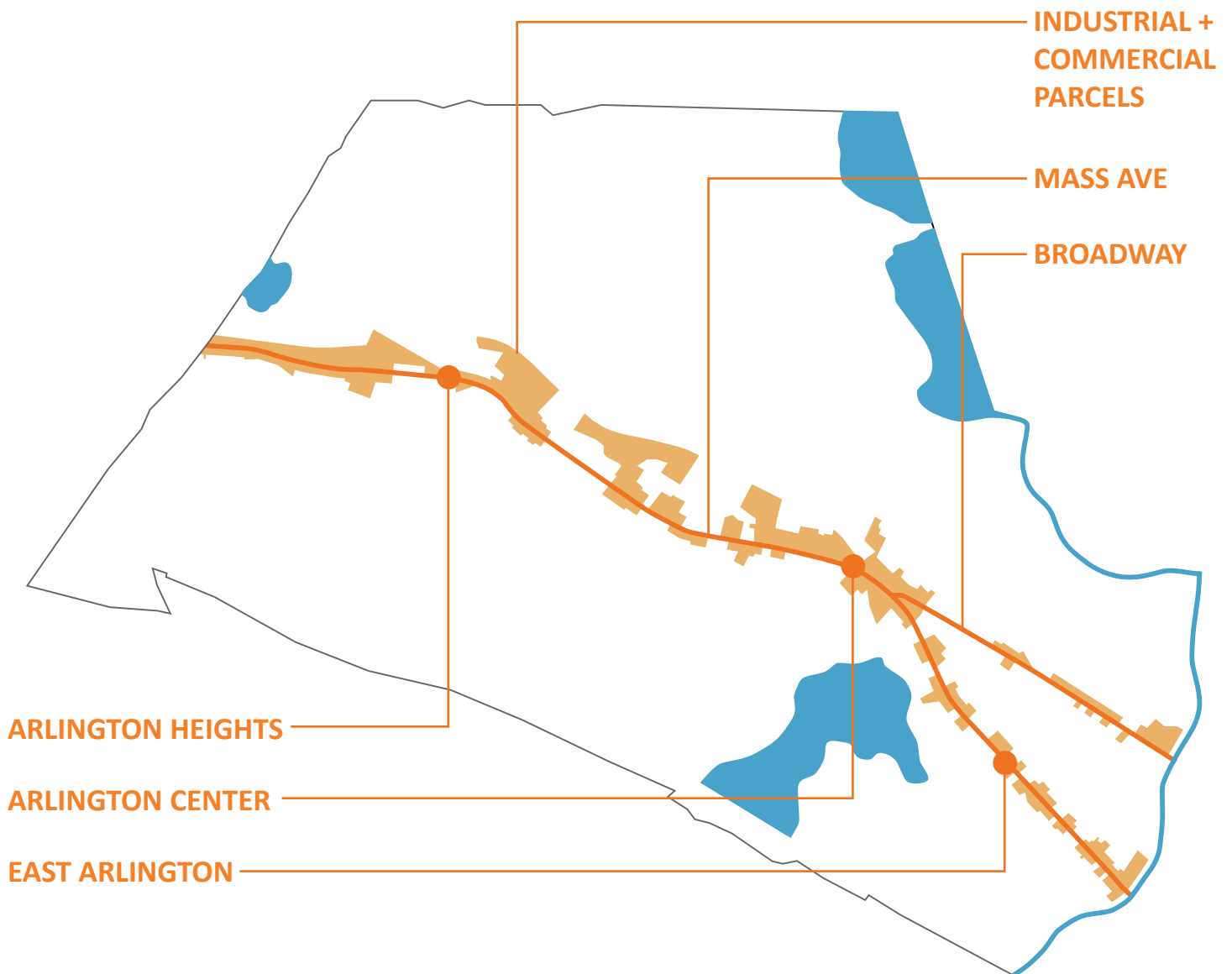
Commercial establishments need to advertise. However, advertising signs should be legible and appropriate to Arlington's historic areas without contributing to visual clutter. **A balance needs to be struck between the desire to call attention to individual businesses and the desire for a positive image for Arlington.** Signs can either complement or detract from that image depending on their individual design, placement, quantity, size, materials, color and condition. Certain types of signs are more appropriate to specific areas than others. What is appropriate for a suburban strip mall, where cars drive by quickly and pedestrians are few, is inappropriate for a commercial center or historic area with many pedestrians and slower moving traffic.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE IN ARLINGTON CENTER

ARLINGTON'S ARTERIALS + NODES



Mass Ave. has played a critical role in the evolution of Arlington. It lies at the flatlands and connects the Town east to west, defining each of the Town's commercial centers: Arlington Heights, Arlington Center and East Arlington. It is the primary commercial corridor that draws people from the many residential neighborhoods surrounding it.

Although smaller in scale, Broadway is also a corridor that is advantageous for redevelopment in light of the fact that it, like Mass Ave, is accessible to good public transit. **While Mass Ave. and Broadway are not the same, nor are they uniform, they are both well served by transit and therefore are locations where the greatest height and density are appropriate.**

1

BUILDING SETBACKS

ENCOURAGE

- An appropriate relationship to the street based on the street size and sidewalk width
- Plazas and open spaces with landscaping and street furniture
- Upper-level step-backs to diminish effect of tall building height

DISCOURAGE

- The “canyon effect” with large buildings in close proximity to the street
- Surface parking in setback zones
- Large setbacks that disconnect the building from the sidewalk and public realm

ELEMENTS

FRONT STEP-BACK

Reduces the visual appearance of height

FRONT SETBACK

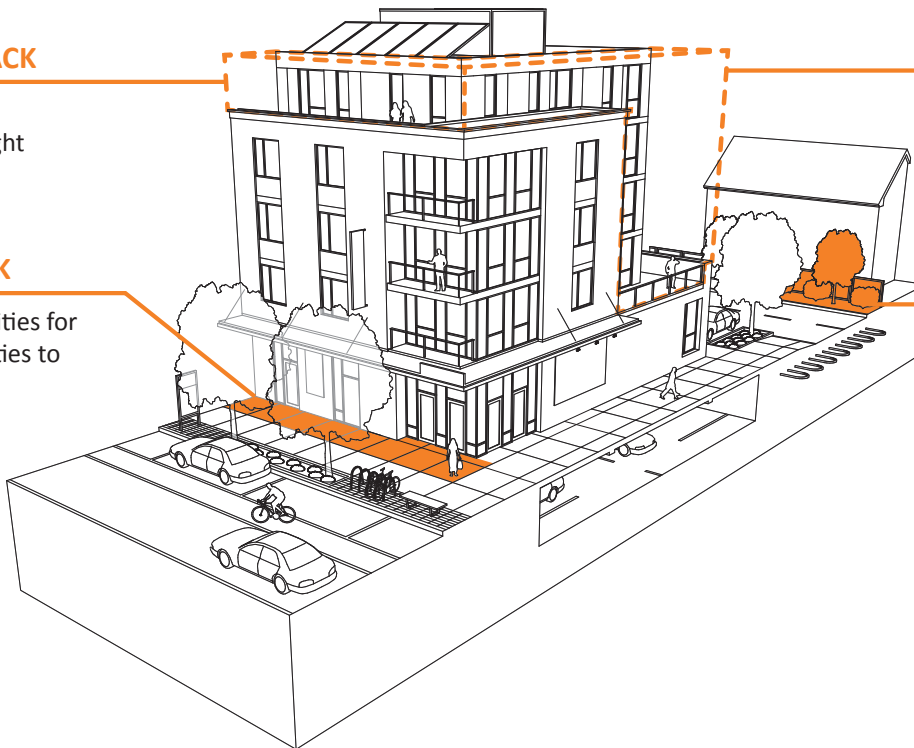
Provides opportunities for ground floor activities to extend outside

SIDE STEP-BACK

Helps to mitigate the mass of the building

REAR SETBACK

Works to address relationships to existing residential areas



EXAMPLES



Active plaza uses



Tapered building height



Rooftop terrace

2 BUILDING HEIGHT

ENCOURAGE

- A maximum building height to four (4) stories in the existing business centers, with (5) stories allowable by meeting additional criteria or in special locations
- A variety of building heights for large projects
- Tapering height towards neighborhoods

DISCOURAGE

- Severe height discrepancies between new buildings and existing neighborhoods
- The “canyon effect” created by a continuous series of buildings close to one another
- Significant shadow impacts created by tall buildings

ELEMENTS

BONUS HEIGHT

Potential incentive for providing additional public benefits

HORIZONTAL DIVISIONS

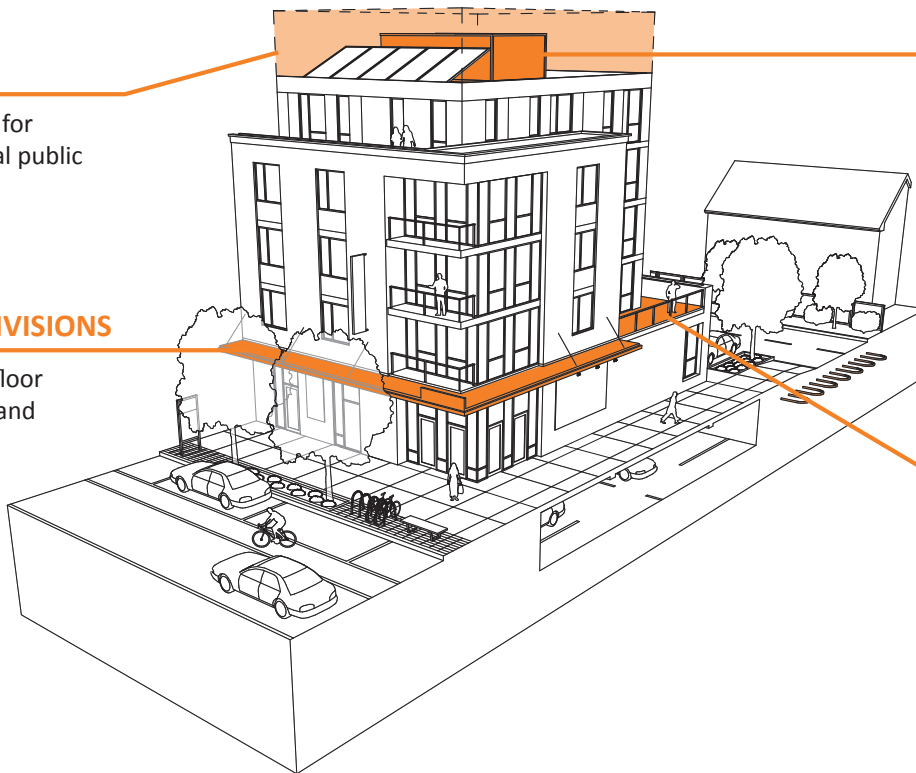
Highlights ground floor commercial space and provides signage opportunities

MECHANICALS

Screen rooftop equipment from view

TAPERING HEIGHT

Works to address relationships to existing residential areas



EXAMPLES



Differentiation of upper story



Cluster housing



Modest building step-backs

3

PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

ENCOURAGE

- Inclusion of public spaces from the beginning of the development process
- Active ground floor uses with frequent entry points, windows, and street furniture
- Rain gardens, mature trees, permeable pavers and green infrastructure in plaza spaces

DISCOURAGE

- Privately-owned public spaces that are uninviting and are disconnected from adjoining sites
- Wide building setbacks along commercial corridors
- Projects that give preference to parking and driving at the expense of walking or biking
- Multiple curb cuts on a single property

ELEMENTS

EXTERIOR SPACES

Provide depth and shadow to facade

FREQUENT ENTRIES

Facilitates public interaction

TRANSPARENCY

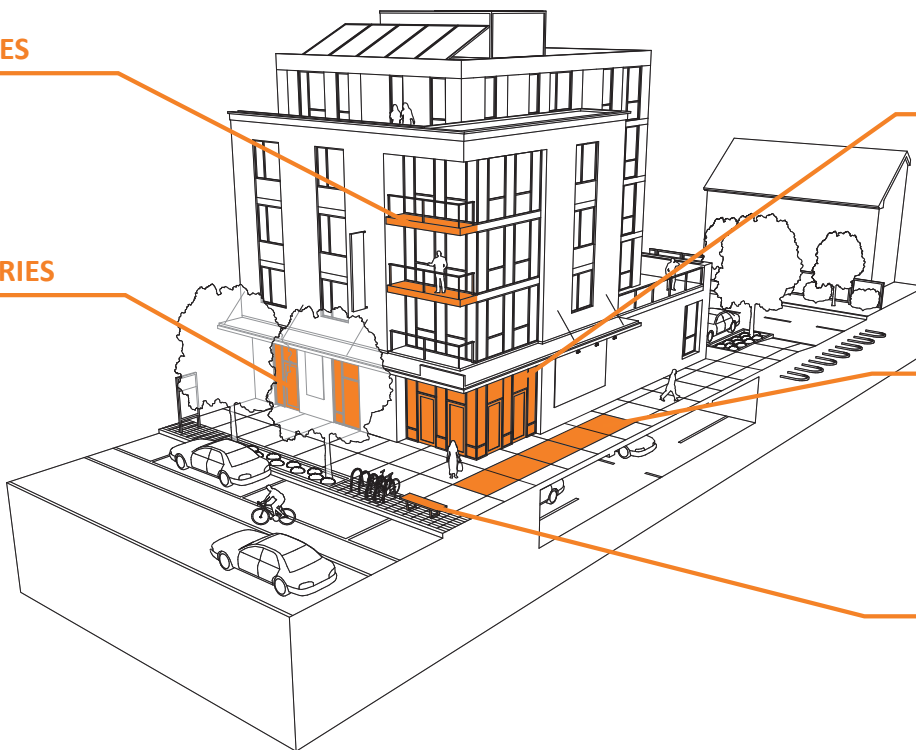
Increases visual connection to commercial spaces

PAVING VARIETY

Creates visual interest and sense of place

STREET FURNITURE

Establishes a pedestrian-oriented public realm



EXAMPLES



Exterior seating areas



High levels of transparency



Foldable doors

4

PARKING + ACCESS

ENCOURAGE

- Accessible, but not highly visible, parking areas
- Surface parking appropriately buffered with landscaping
- Accommodating bike parking
- Shared parking to reduce over-parking sites
- Underground or below-grade parking where feasible

DISCOURAGE

- Large surface parking in front of buildings
- Projects which give preference to cars over pedestrians and bicyclists

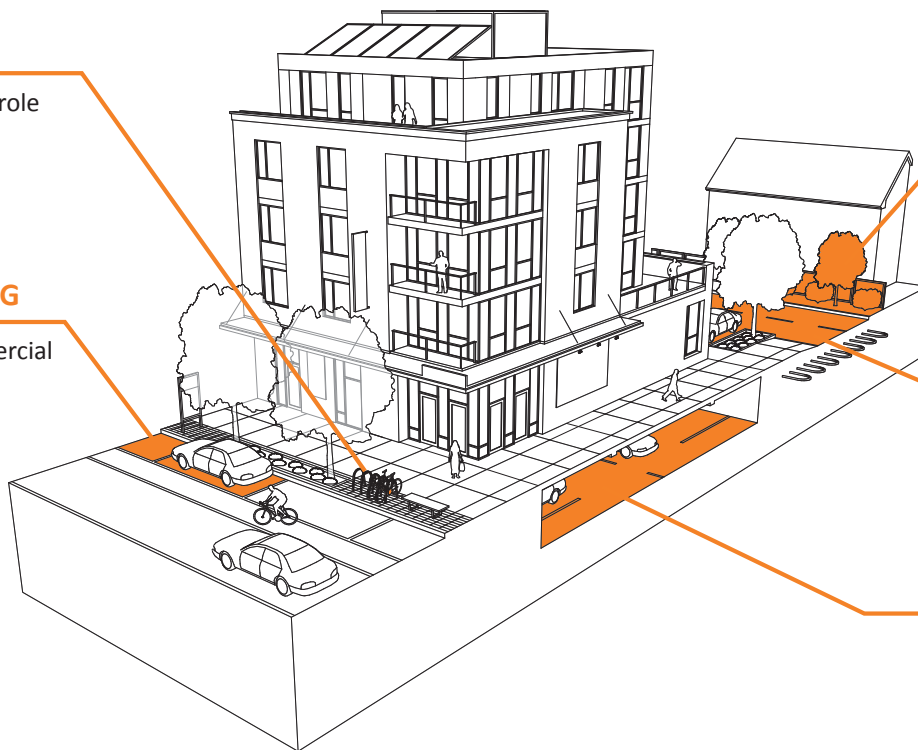
ELEMENTS

BICYCLE RACKS

Anticipate greater role for bike transport

STREET PARKING

Encourages commercial activity



GREEN BUFFERS

Mitigates relationship of parking areas to abutters

SURFACE LOTS

Located to side or rear of property

BELOW GRADE

Maximize use of real estate

EXAMPLES



Porous parking areas



Landscape buffers



Cycle tracks

5

CONNECTIONS + LINKAGES

ENCOURAGE

- Integration with adjoining residential areas and open space networks
- Connections to adjoining sites and parks
- Pedestrian connections between Mass Ave, the Bikeway and the Mill Brook

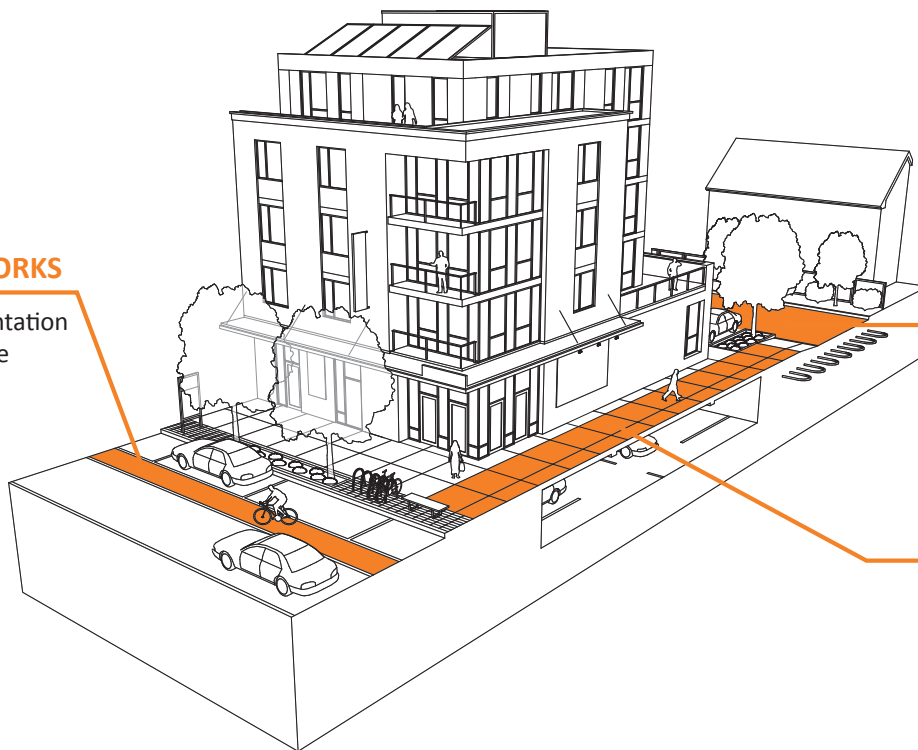
DISCOURAGE

- Development that limits connections between neighborhoods and corridors
- Auto-centric connections that fail to provide for cyclists and pedestrians
- Inward-focusing development that fails to integrate itself into the fabric of the town

ELEMENTS

BICYCLE NETWORKS

Advance implementation of a comprehensive bicycle network



SHARED SPACES

Seek opportunities to foster connections between sites

THROUGH SITE LINKS

Anticipate connections to Mill Brook and Bike Path corridors

EXAMPLES



Tree-lined alley



Curbless streets / shared spaces



Lush and well-lit linkages

6

FACADE + MATERIALS

ENCOURAGE

- Ground floor transparency
- High-quality, durable and natural materials
- Variation in building facades by adding bays, balconies and terraces
- Lighting that prevents glare and upward light pollution

DISCOURAGE

- Cheap building finishes
- Monolithic facade treatments
- Excessively long, uninterrupted building elevations
- Flat, blank walls along street facing elevations
- Parking garages that contain large blank walls facing the street

ELEMENTS

TERMINATIONS

Accentuate building roof lines

RHYTHMS

Deploy patterns to give building elevations a structure and hierarchy

INTERSECTIONS

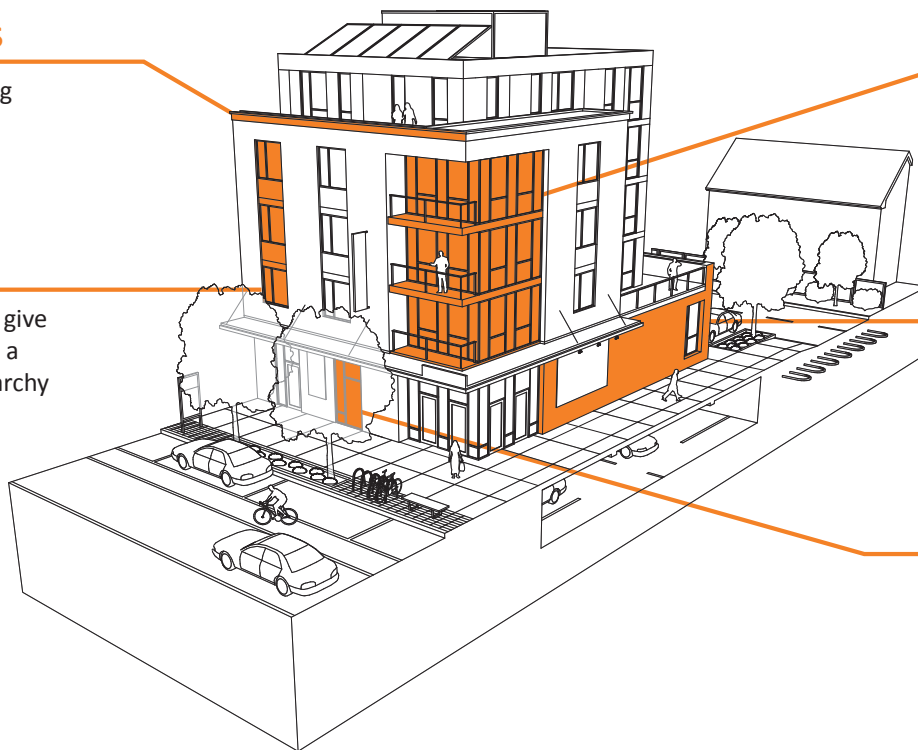
Celebrate primary building or site corners

GROUND LEVEL

Specify long-lasting, natural, and durable products

GLAZING

Increase transparency at ground floor



EXAMPLES



Variation and depth in facade



A variety of cladding materials



Facade articulation

7

SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

ENCOURAGE

- A variety of scales that correlate to the building, complex, and street width
- Signage that is integrated into architecture of the building
- Well-designed, tasteful materials

DISCOURAGE

- Stand-alone signs that are not designed as an integral part of the building
- Internally lit plastic molded signs
- Neon and fluorescent or beacon signs
- Inconsistency among signs in the business district

ELEMENTS

PROJECTING / BANNER

Function best at the scale of the building

MONUMENT

Located in the public right-of-way for pedestrians

CANOPY / AWNING

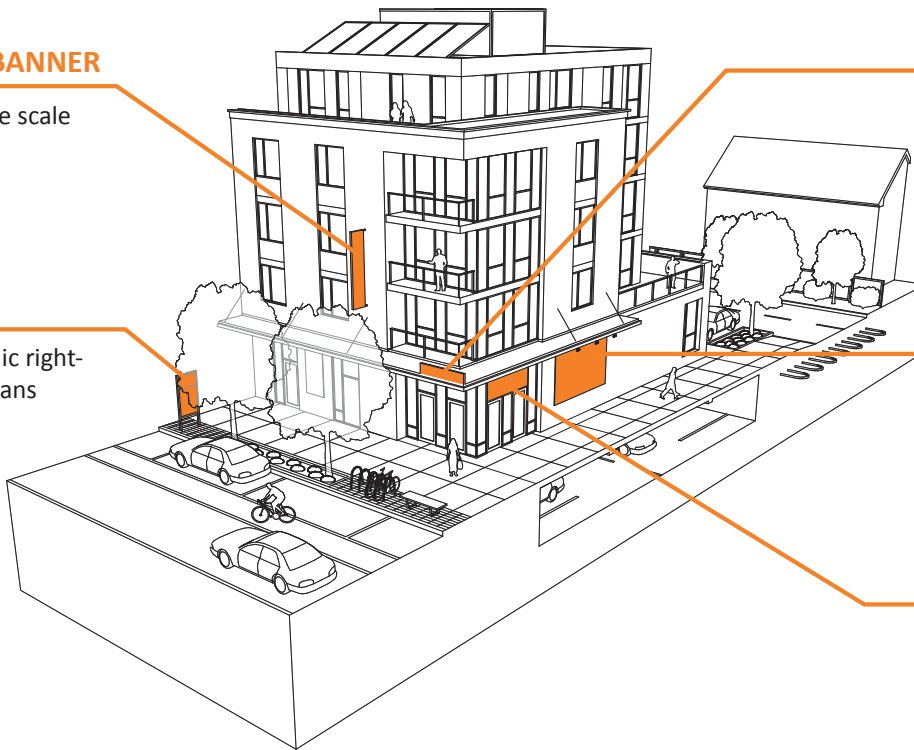
High-quality fabric materials

WALL / DIRECTORY

Useful for buildings with numerous tenants

FRIEZE / TRANSOM

Ideal for ground level commercial spaces



EXAMPLES



Architecturally integrated wall-mounted



Elegant awning signage



Tasteful transom signage

MINUTEMAN BIKEWAY



MORE THAN JUST A RECREATIONAL PATH, THE BIKEWAY IS ALSO A COMMUTING CORRIDOR

ARLINGTON'S OPEN SPACES



The Minuteman Bikeway is an open space amenity for Arlington and the entire region. More than just a recreational asset, it continues to emerge as a viable path for commuting and will serve this purpose well into the future. **As a type of transportation route, the trail can support greater density on underutilized properties that abut it, although its interface**

with new development will be smaller in scale and different than the Mass Ave/ Broadway corridors. Connections between it and adjoining sites should be enhanced. Nearby amenities include numerous fields and playgrounds, Spy Pond, the Mill Brook, and the Town's three commercial centers.

1 BUILDING SETBACKS

ENCOURAGE

- An appropriate setback from the trail, with a vegetated buffer
- Pocket parks and recreational amenities to enliven the trail

DISCOURAGE

- Developments that fail to embrace the Bikeway as an amenity
- Developments that turn their back on the Bikeway

ELEMENTS

SIDE STEP-BACK

Helps to mitigate the mass of the building

SIDE SETBACK

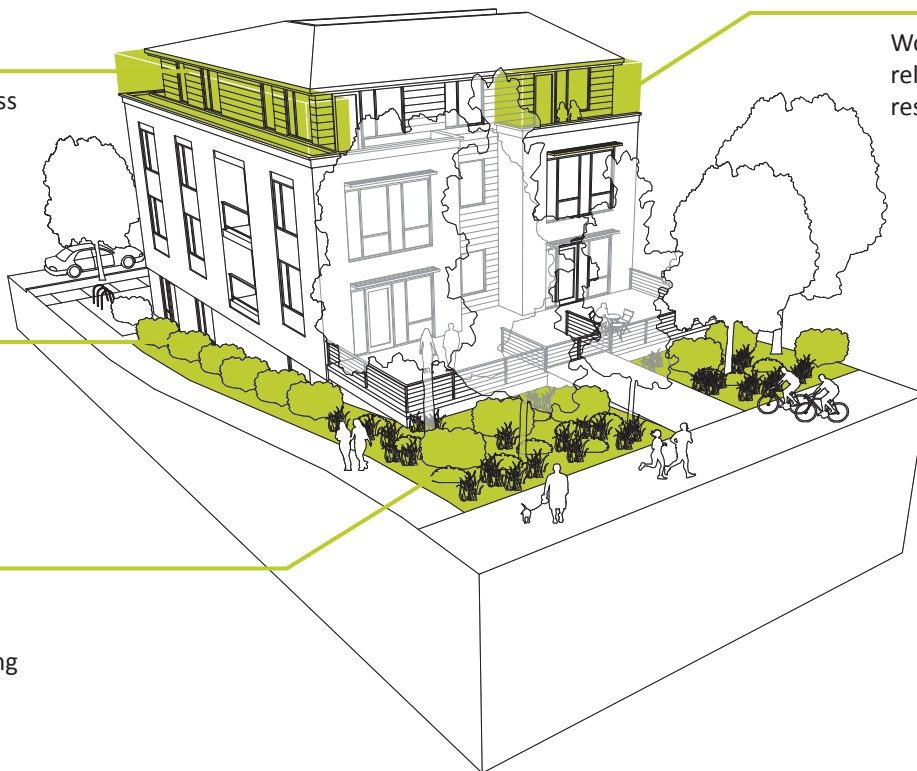
Buffers through-site connections from buildings mass

REAR SETBACK

Shields the building from the Bikepath and the Bikepath from the building

REAR STEP-BACK

Works to address relationships to existing residential areas



EXAMPLES



Development pressure along the Bikeway will continue as it becomes a more attractive alternative for commuters

2

BUILDING HEIGHT

ENCOURAGE

- Building heights between three (3) and four (4) stories depending on proximity to natural/historic features
- A range of heights that taper towards existing residential areas
- Upper-level step-backs to diminish effect of tall buildings

DISCOURAGE

- Excessively large building heights in close proximity to the Bikeway

ELEMENTS

MATERIAL CHANGES

Variation in materials helps to break down the building mass

ROOF LINES

Sloping roofs shed water and relate to Arlington's historical character

GROUP ELEMENTS

Create hierarchy and order for building elevations

EMBEDDED BASE

Take advantage of natural grade changes



EXAMPLES



Height is less critical than the character of the architecture and how it interacts with the Bikeway

3

PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

ENCOURAGE

- Access points onto the trail from new development that fronts it
- The protection of historical and cultural resource areas
- Active ground floor uses with frequent entry points
- The incorporation of activated public spaces

DISCOURAGE

- Developments that limit connectivity or diminish the potential for public interaction
- Flat, blank walls facing the Bikeway or street

ELEMENTS

EXTERIOR SPACES

Foster interaction with the outdoors

DIRECT CONNECTIONS

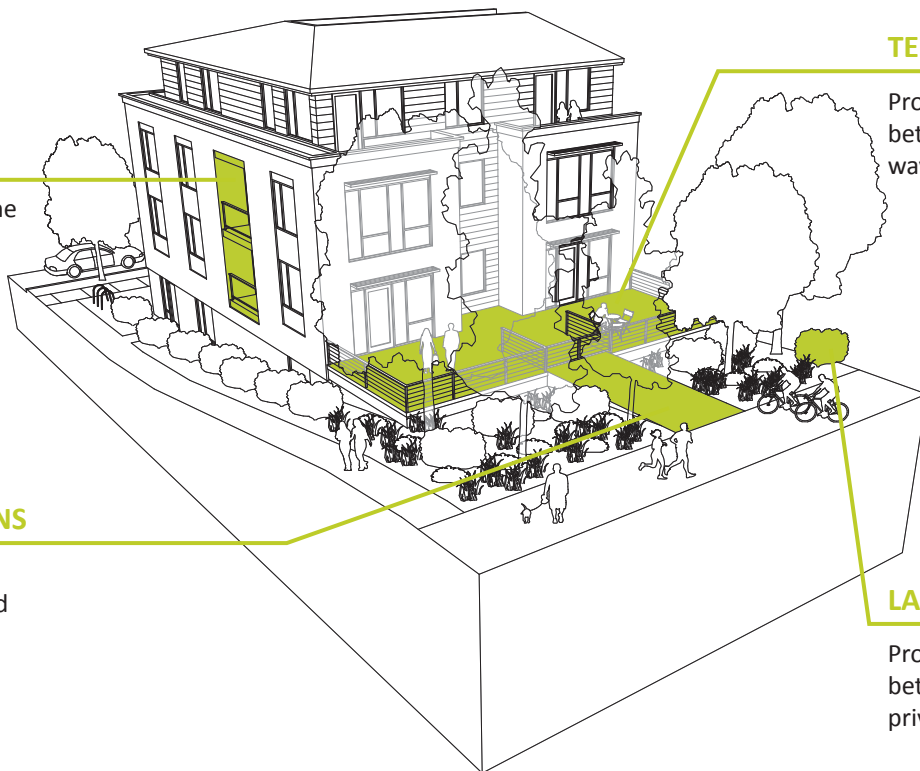
Ensure connections between the Bikeway and new construction

TERRACES

Provide transition between public right-of-way and private property

LANDSCAPE BUFFERS

Provide transition space between public and private realms



EXAMPLES



The relationship between buildings and the Bikeway will and should be varied along its length

4

PARKING + ACCESS

ENCOURAGE

- Incorporation of bike and pedestrian amenities including bike parking/storage
- Use of below grade parking for adjacent development

DISCOURAGE

- Large areas of surface parking
- Car storage directly adjacent to the Bikeway
- Garage doors along public right-of-way or facing the Bikeway

ELEMENTS

STREET PARKING

Encourages commercial activity and buffers pedestrians from street

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS

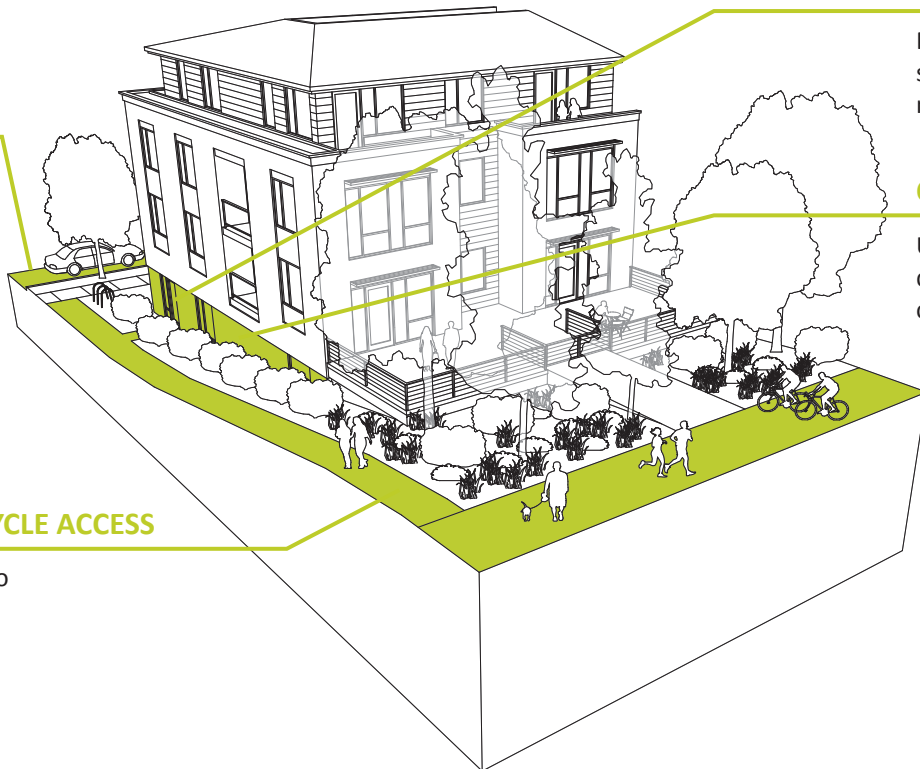
Optimize opportunities to foster connectivity

BIKE STORAGE

Provide on-site bike storage for alternate modes of travel

COVERED PARKING

Utilize topography to diminish presence of cars



EXAMPLES



Integrate bicycle parking and storage into the architecture with the same degree of consideration as that for cars

5

CONNECTIONS + LINKAGES

ENCOURAGE

- Connections between Minuteman Bikeway and commercial districts
- Connections to adjoining sites
- Connections between Mass Ave, the Bikeway and the Mill Brook

DISCOURAGE

- Developments that limit opportunities to connect places together
- Privatize enclaves lacking public access

ELEMENTS

SIDEWALKS

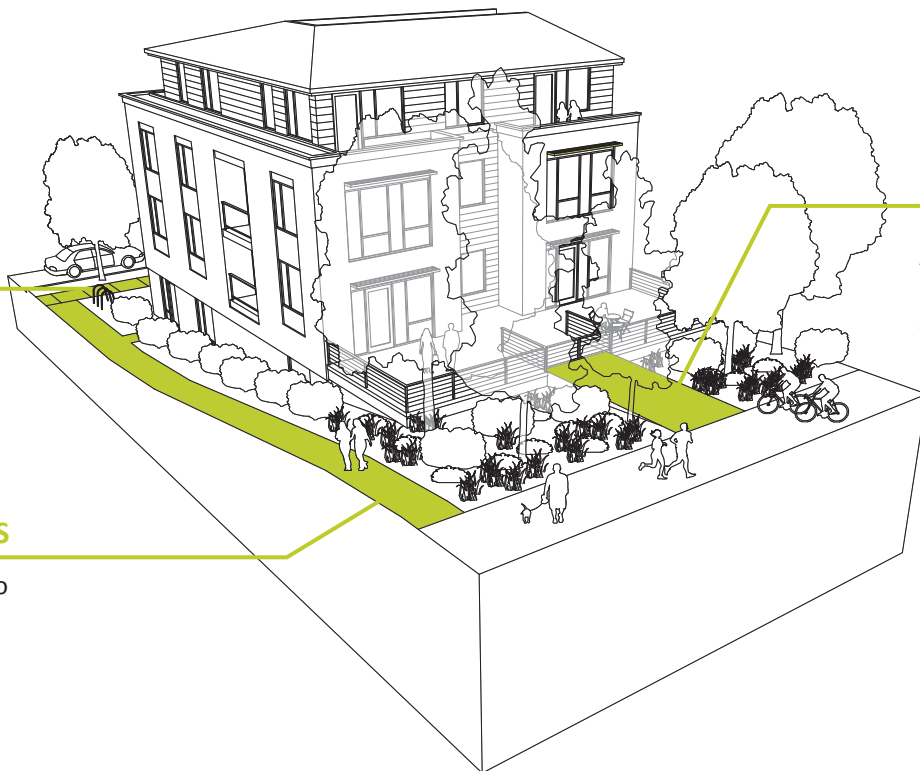
Link the development into the walking fabric of the town

THRU-CONNECTIONS

Connect the street grid to the bikeway

CYCLIST ACCESS

Link new development to the Bikeway in concrete, meaningful ways



EXAMPLES



Create connections between new development, the Bikeway, and the existing streets to anticipate increased cycling in the future

6

FACADE + MATERIALS

ENCOURAGE

- Ground floor transparency and interaction with the Bikeway
- High-quality, durable and natural materials
- Variation and depth in building facades by adding bays, balconies and terraces

DISCOURAGE

- Cheap building finishes
- Monolithic facade treatments
- Excessively long, uninterrupted building elevations
- Flat, blank walls facing the street or Bikeway

ELEMENTS

VARY MATERIALS

Diminish the mass of the building by breaking it down into discrete volumes

GROUP ELEMENTS

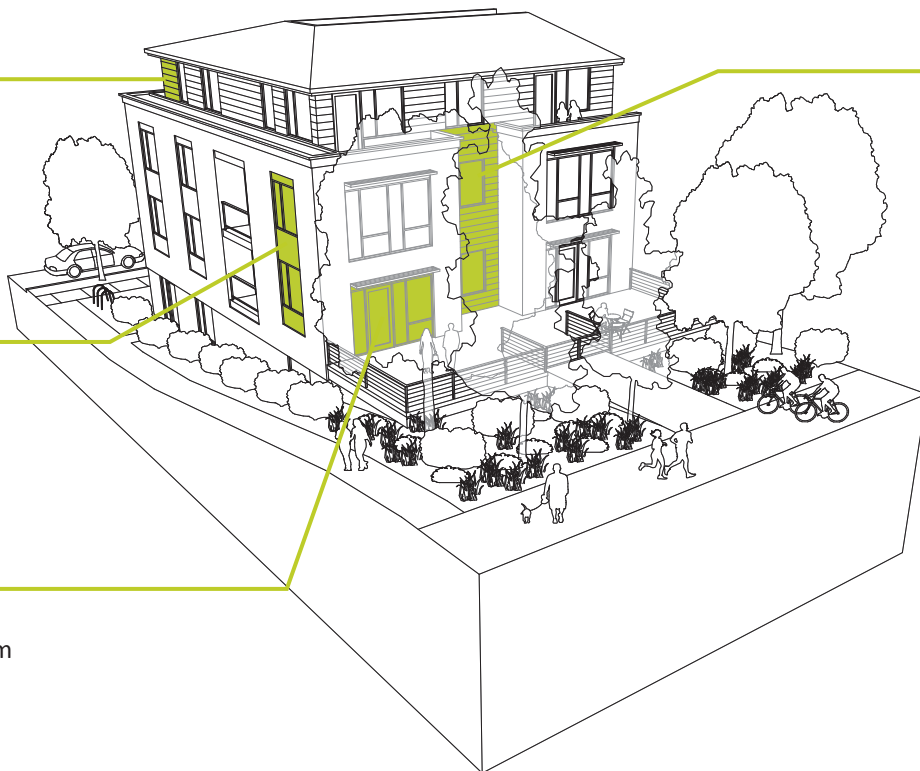
Create hierarchy in building elevations

TRANSPARENCY

Take advantage of views towards the Bikeway from living spaces

CREATE DEPTH

Helps to break down building mass



EXAMPLES



Deploying a variety of building materials assist in breaking down the visual mass of the architecture

7

SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

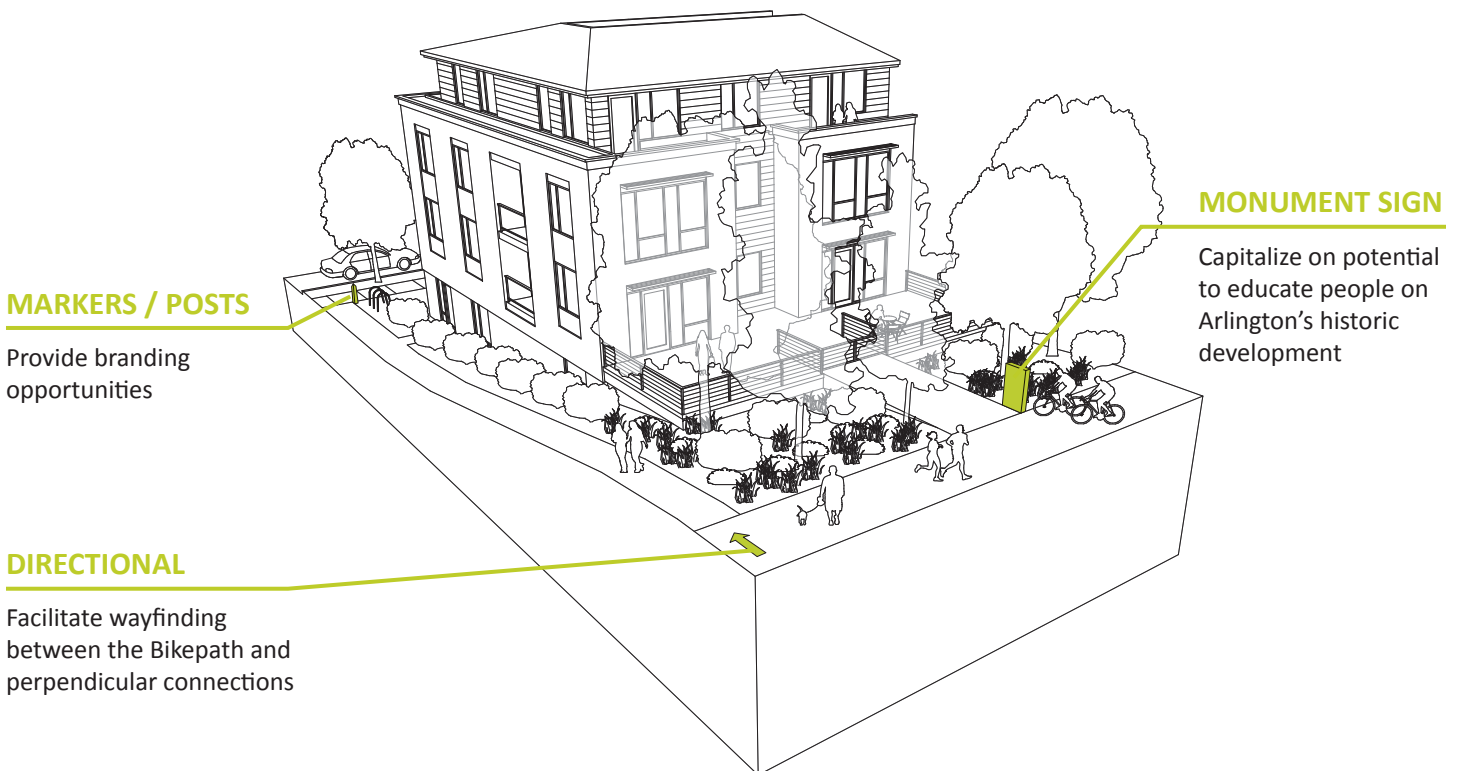
ENCOURAGE

- Branding of the Bikeway
- Opportunities to interpret history and enhance wayfinding
- Integration of signage into architecture of the building

DISCOURAGE

- Stand-alone signs that are not designed as an integral part of the building
- Internally lit plastic molded signs
- Neon and fluorescent or beacon signs
- Inconsistency among signs along the Bikeway
- Sign clutter

ELEMENTS



EXAMPLES



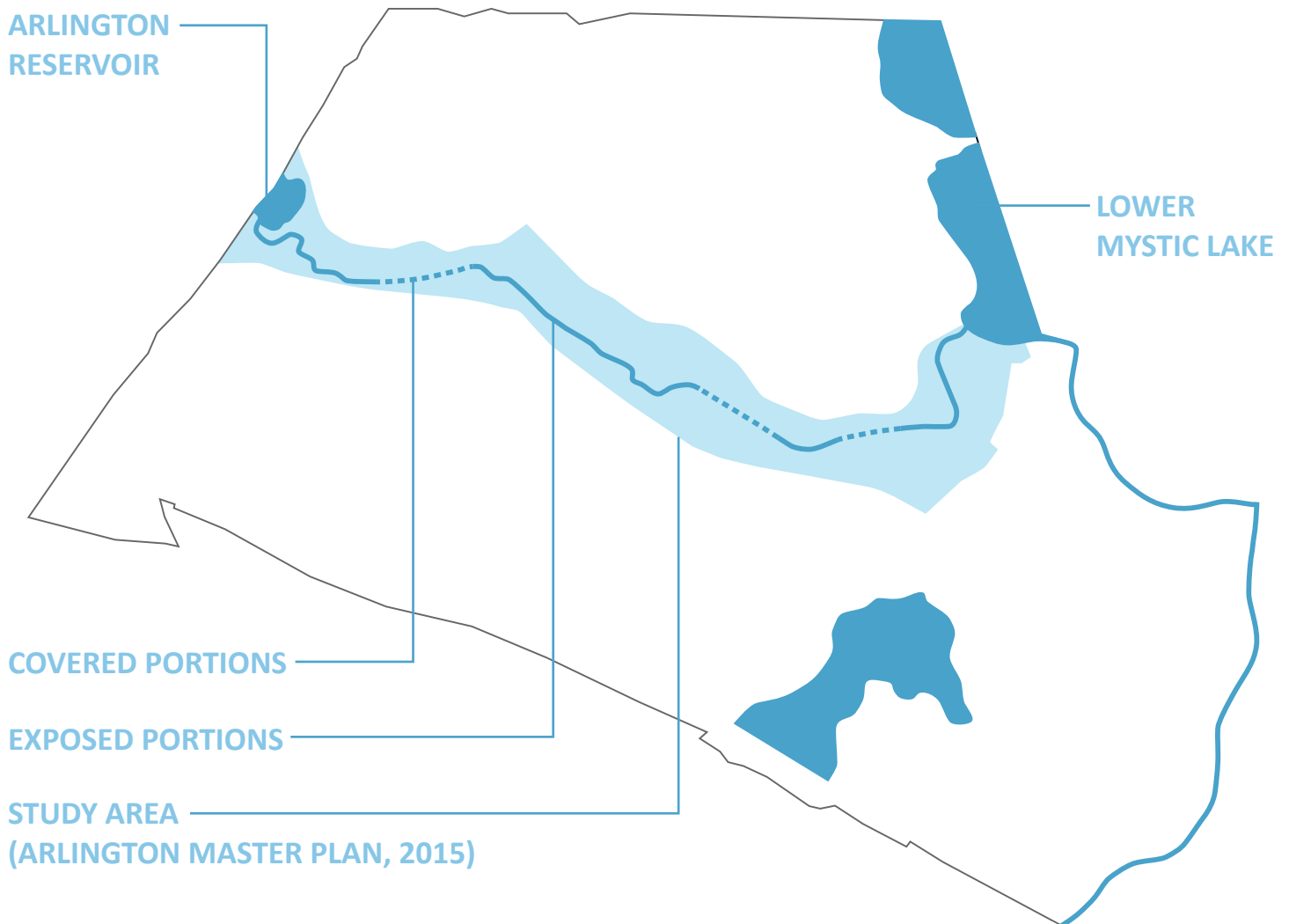
New development has the potential to build on the identity of the Bike Path

THE MILL BROOK



THE MILL BROOK AS IT PASSES BETWEEN ARLINGTON CENTER AND ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

ARLINGTON'S INDUSTRIAL PAST



The Mill Brook is a largely untapped natural resource that is frequently hidden from view. Nevertheless, its long-term potential as a catalyst for redevelopment in Arlington is great, particularly if portions of the brook can be made more visible. **New development on underutilized sites adjacent to the waterway must be designed in a manner that simultaneously capitalizes on its natural beauty, history, and its potential as a publicly-accessible pedestrian corridor, but also protects the site against potential flooding.**

Developing a walking path along the Mill Brook has the potential to relieve some traffic from the Bikeway. In terms of character, the neighborhoods that abut the Mill Brook have a legacy of “working and making” things. It is an eclectic mixture of new and old buildings. This character should be preserved and expanded. Public access to the Mill Brook should be increased and encouraged with pedestrian walkways, restaurants and public amenities.

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1

BUILDING SETBACKS

ENCOURAGE

- Open space corridor/ linear parks adjacent to the water way
- Buildings above grade to protect from flooding
- Setbacks to protect wetlands and facilitate public access
- Views of the Mill Brook and historic buildings

DISCOURAGE

- Excessive shadow impacts on the water system
- Building over the Mill Brook

ELEMENTS

SIDE STEP-BACK

Break down building mass

REAR STEP-BACK

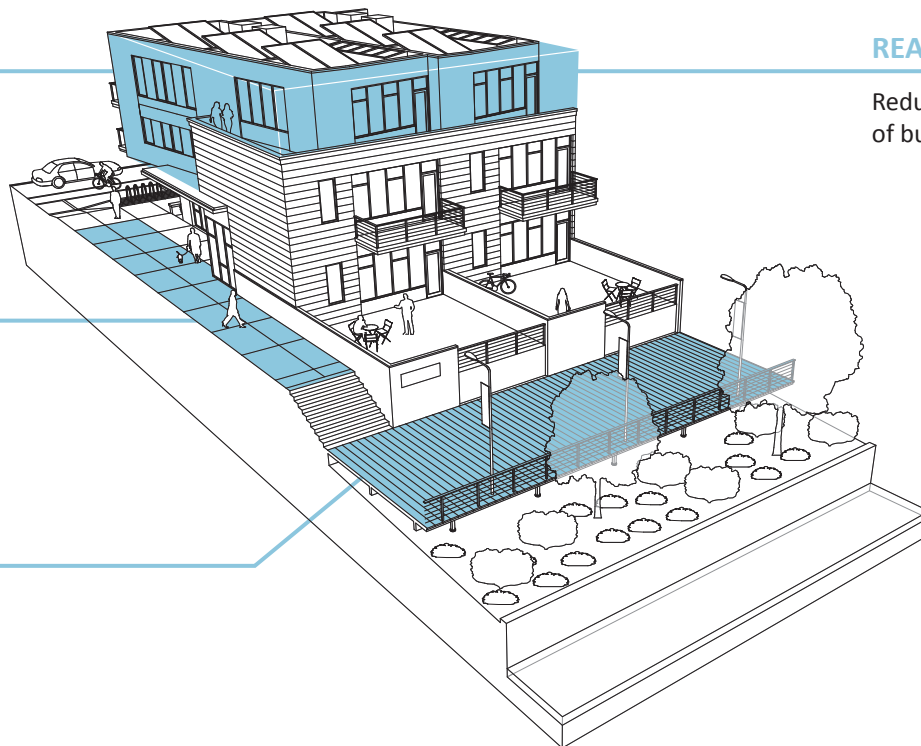
Reduces visual presence of building elevation

SIDE SETBACK

Pedestrian corridors to enable passage

REAR SETBACK

Fosters transition between public and private space



EXAMPLES



Upper and lower step-backs



Integration of landscape



The waterway as amenity

2

BUILDING HEIGHT

ENCOURAGE

- Exterior decks and transition areas between public and private zones
- A variety of building heights between two (2) and four (4) stories

DISCOURAGE

- Excessively large building heights in close proximity to the Mill Brook
- Shadow impacts on the waterway

ELEMENTS

GROUP ELEMENTS

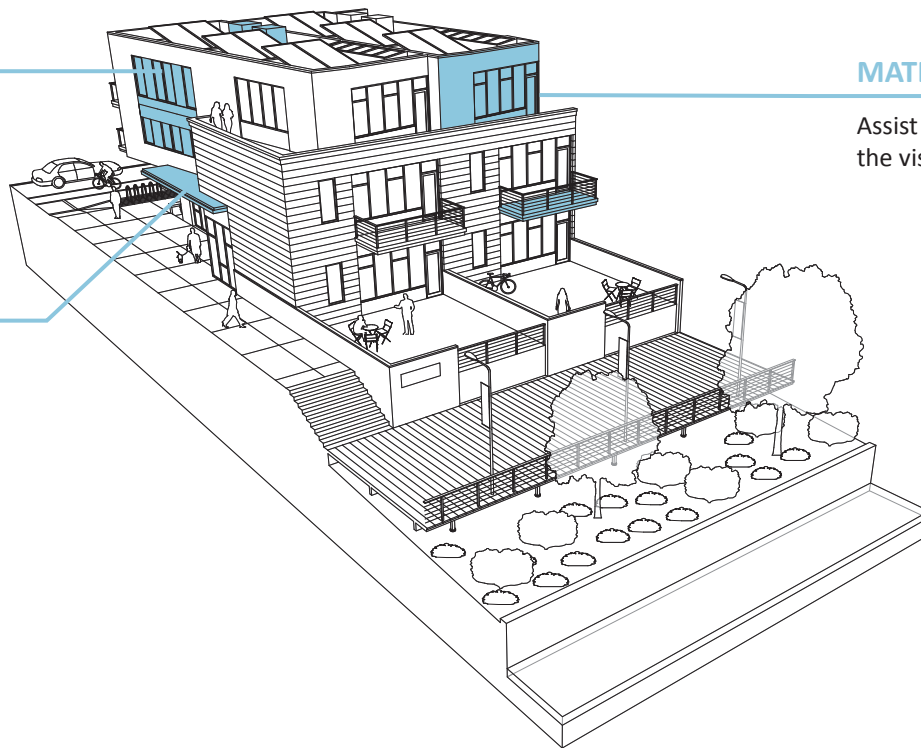
Create hierarchy in building elevations

AWNINGS/CANOPIES

Provide signage and wayfinding opportunities

MATERIAL CHANGE

Assist in breaking down the visual mass



EXAMPLES



Incorporating balconies and tree canopies will help to integrate the architecture with the Mill Brook

3

PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

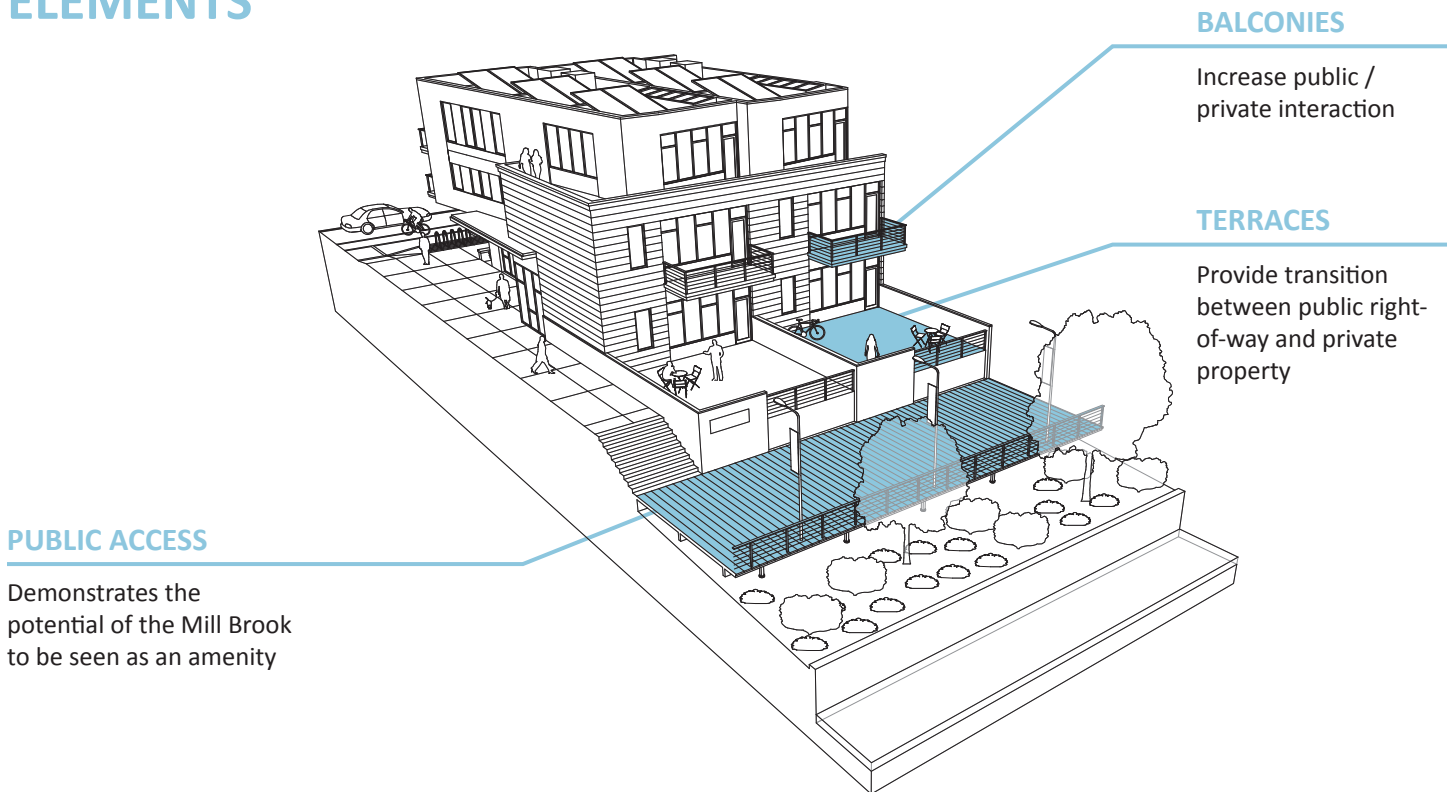
ENCOURAGE

- Building pass-thrus to increase site accessibility and permeability
- Changes in grade to elevate building ground floors above the flood plain
- Integration of historic buildings into new development plans

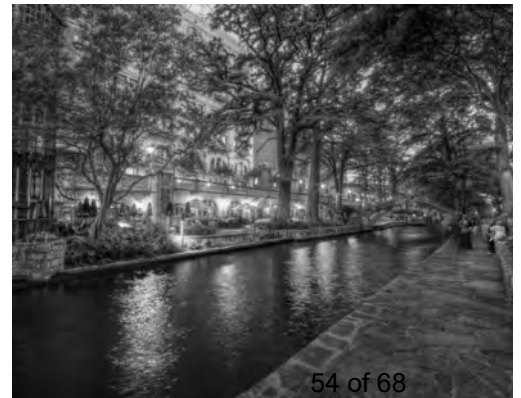
DISCOURAGE

- Developments that limit connectivity or diminish the potential for public interaction

ELEMENTS



EXAMPLES



A continuous path along the Mill Brook will build on Arlington's robust existing open space network

4

PARKING + ACCESS

ENCOURAGE

- Using the topography to park cars below buildings in areas prone to flooding
- Locating surface parking to the rear or middle of blocks and visually buffer with landscaping
- Areas for bicycle parking

DISCOURAGE

- Large areas of surface parking
- Car storage directly adjacent to the Mill Brook
- Garage doors along public right-of-way

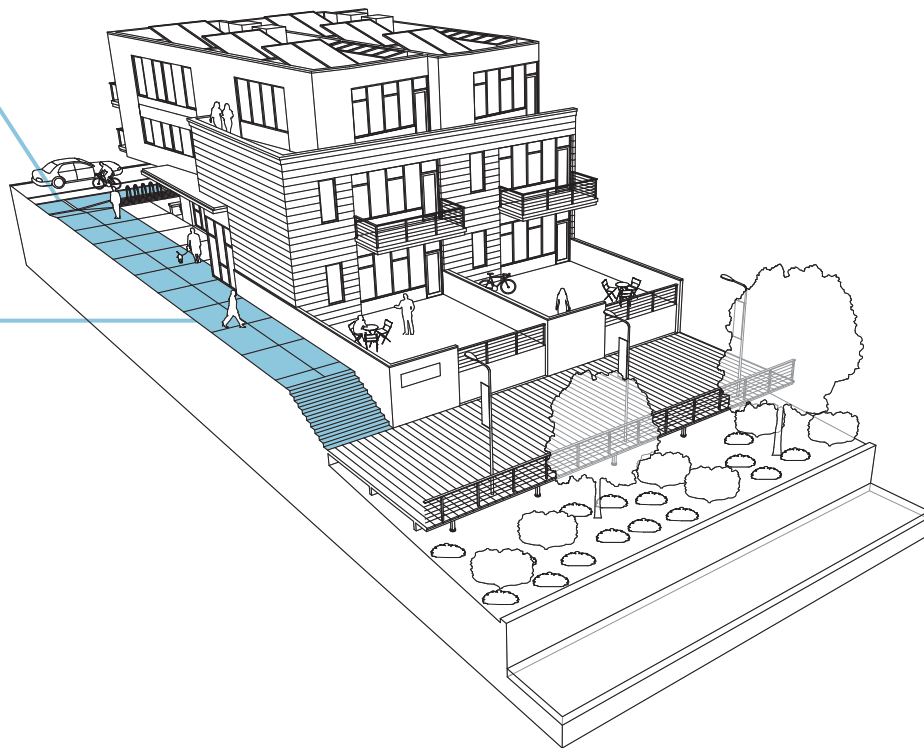
ELEMENTS

STREET PARKING

Encourages commercial activity

THRU-PASSAGES

Facilitates connectivity to Mass Ave and the Bikeway



EXAMPLES



Permeable paving



Parking hidden below building



Bioswales reduce the heat island effect

5

CONNECTIONS + LINKAGES

ENCOURAGE

- Open space buffers to address stormwater runoff and retention
- Sustainable planning and engineering techniques to reduce flooding
- Building and site pass-throughs to increase public access
- Connections between Mass Ave, the Bikeway and the Mill Brook

DISCOURAGE

- Developments that limit opportunities to connect places together
- Private enclaves
- Development that limits public access to, and visibility of, the Brook

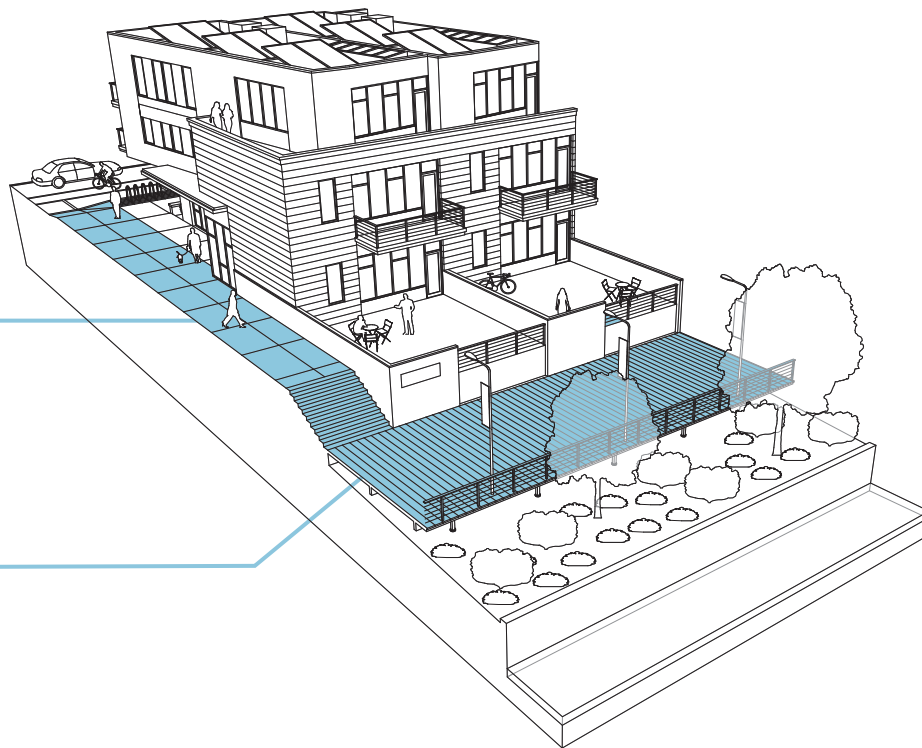
ELEMENTS

PASS-THROUGHS

Anticipate connections to Mass Ave and the Bike Path corridors

BROOK BOARDWALK

Enable links to adjoining community assets



EXAMPLES



Perpendicular connections to adjoining neighborhoods will better integrate the Mill Brook with the town's neighborhoods

6

FACADE + MATERIALS

ENCOURAGE

- Connections to Arlington's cultural landscape and industrial past
- High-quality, durable and natural materials
- Variation in building facades by adding bays, balconies and terraces

DISCOURAGE

- Cheap building finishes
- Monolithic facade treatments
- Excessively long, uninterrupted building elevations
- Flat, blank walls along Brook-facing elevations

ELEMENTS

NATURAL MATERIALS

Deploy durable materials that resist decay

PROJECTIONS

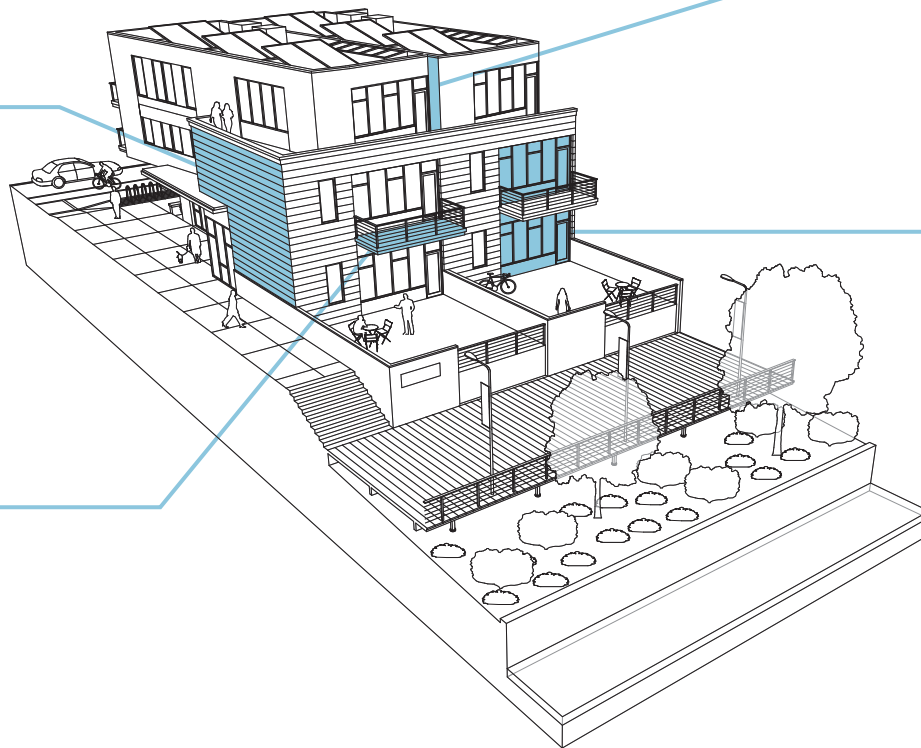
Add variety and visual interest to elevations

CREATE DEPTH

Helps to break down building mass

RIVER VIEWS

Capitalize on added value of the Mill Brook



EXAMPLES



As the Mill Brook is improved as a resource and not a liability, it holds the potential to orient new buildings towards it

7

SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

ENCOURAGE

- Branding of the Mill Brook and linkages to adjoining community assets
- Signage to be integrated into architecture of the building
- Well-designed, tasteful, natural materials
- Interpretive signs about the uses of the Mill Brook over time

DISCOURAGE

- Stand-alone signs that are not designed as an integral part of the building
- Internally lit plastic molded signs
- Neon and fluorescent or beacon signs
- Inconsistency amongst signs along the Mill Brook

ELEMENTS

PROJECTING

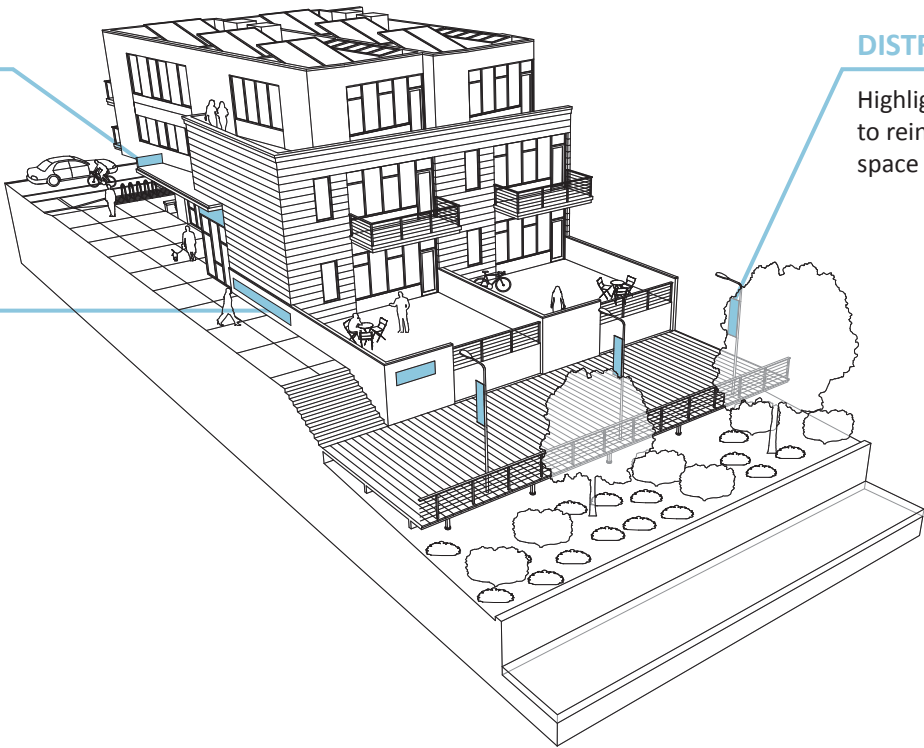
Calibrated to scale of buildings

DIRECTIONAL

Used for orientation

DISTRICT BRANDING

Highlight opportunities to reinforce the open space network



EXAMPLES



A more comprehensive branding of the Mill Brook is needed

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BALCONY	open exterior space projecting from the side of a building with no supports to the ground
BAY	a projecting portion of a building that typically overhangs the ground below
BIOSWALE	landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water
CURB CUT	area of sidewalk where the curb has been removed so cars can cross over from the street
CYCLE TRACK	bike lane located within the sidewalk with markings or bollards to separate it from pedestrians
FACADE	the vertical surface or elevation of a building, there are typically 4 major facades of a building
FRONTAGE	the primary facade of a building that faces the public right-of-way
GEOHERMAL ENERGY	heating/cooling system using the constant ground temperature to reduce energy needs
GLAZING	portion of a building's facade that is transparent, i.e. clad in a glass curtain wall system
GREEN ROOF	a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation
GROUNDWATER	water held underground in the soil or in pores and crevices in rock
LEED	"Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design," a green building certification program that recognizes best-in-class sustainable building strategies and practices
LIGHT POLLUTION	brightening of the night sky caused by street lights and other man-made sources
PATIO	paved ground-level surface primarily intended for human occupation
PERMEABLE PAVING	paving systems that allow for rainwater to infiltrate through and into the ground below
PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY	the publically-owned space between buildings containing the street and sidewalk
RAIN GARDEN	shallow depression that is planted with deep-rooted native plants and grasses
SET BACK	unbuilt space located between a site's property line and the facade of a building
STEP-BACK	reduction in the floor area of a building past a certain floor to reduce apparent height
STORMWATER	rain that flows over land or impervious surfaces and does not percolate into the ground
STREET FURNITURE	benches, signage, planters, bike racks, and similar amenities located along the sidewalk
TERRACE	exterior space created by stepping back a building's facade from one story to the next





Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

882-892 Massachusetts Avenue

Summary:

8:25 pm The Board will review the changes made and agreed to by the developer in order to meet the conditions of the original special permit granted by the Board, and will discuss whether further changes are necessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▣ Reference Material	Updated_882_Mass_Ave_photos.pdf	Updated 882 Mass Ave photos
▣ Reference Material	Correspondence_ - _882_Mass_Ave EOHLC_Approval_Status_ - _Don_Seltzer.pdf	Correspondence - 882 Mass Ave EOHLC Approval Status - Don Seltzer

From: [John Murphy](#)
To: [Phillip Saltmarsh](#)
Cc: [Claire Ricker](#)
Subject: Re: Updated Rendering
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:40:12 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Morning Claire,

Here are the photos requested of the painting. They are back out at it today. Any updates on information that the ARB was going to get over to us? Here is some painting in process, you can see where some of the white is being covered up.







John Murphy

SUMMIT

Real Estate Strategies LLC

Cell: 207.776.1751

On Jan 18, 2024, at 9:34 PM, John H. Murphy III <john@summit-res.net> wrote:

Hi Claire,

The only little section that isn't updated here is the return vertical pieces before the front section that should be a different color, which Kin pointed out in the meeting. We went over those with Phil and they are already on the list for painting.

Thanks,

John Murphy

SUMMIT

Real Estate Strategies LLC

Cell: 207.776.1751

On Jan 18, 2024, at 3:32 PM, Phillip Saltmarsh <psaltmarsh@marketsquarearchitects.com> wrote:

Please see attached Claire.

Thanks,

Phil

Phillip Saltmarsh

Market Square Architects, PLLC

Senior Project Manager

www.MarketSquareArchitects.com

<image001.png>

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From: Claire Ricker <cricker@town.arlington.ma.us>

Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 2:42 PM

To: John Murphy <john@summit-res.net>; Phillip Saltmarsh <psaltmarsh@marketsquarearchitects.com>

Subject: Updated Rendering

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Hi there –

Would it be possible for you to re-send me the updated rendering of 882 Mass Ave that shows the white accents painted out exhaust louvers painted out? I can't find that document in any email thread.

Thanks very much,
Claire Ricker

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<882 Mass Ave.jpg>

882 Mass Ave EOHLC Approval Status

I would like to provide the Arlington Redevelopment Board with an update of the status of State approval for the affordable apartments at 882 Mass Ave, as of Feb 1, 2024.

The key document in the process for State approval of SHI eligible affordable housing is the Regulatory Agreement. This document sets out all of the legal requirements to be followed, and is signed off jointly by the developer, town, and the state. The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities provides a standard template for this agreement. It is the responsibility of the developer, with the assistance of their hired agent MCO Housing Services, to prepare the document by filling out the specific details, and to gather all of the signatures. There is no separate waiver document or process for undersized units. The actual apartment sizes are listed in the Regulatory Agreement, and if both the state and town sign off on the Agreement, that constitutes the waiver from the minimum size requirements.

A draft document was prepared by MCO Housing last summer. MCO Housing revised the standard template language from a minimum 700 sf for a one bedroom apartment to the actual 507 sf of the designated units. Legal language was added to describe the ‘floating location’ process for the affordable units. Town Manager Jim Feeney and town counsel reviewed this draft document in August, returning it to MCO Housing with no edits. It was then the responsibility of the developer and MCO Housing to complete the signatures and to submit it to EOHLC.

Rather than complete the submission, the developer chose to wait four months until late December. One week after Inspectional Services issued a Certificate of Occupancy, the developer returned the application to Jim Feeney on the Friday before Christmas to get the necessary signatures from town officials.

The completed Regulatory Agreement was then sent off to EOHLC for their approval. It was rejected and returned last week because of a minor mistake in the signoffs. On January 25 it was again signed by Jim Feeney and sent back, for EOHLC approval and signoffs.

If EOHLC does sign off on this Regulatory Agreement, that would constitute acceptance of the undersized apartments. The developer is required to promptly file this Regulatory Agreement with the Registry of Deeds to complete the process.

As of today, no filing has been posted.

But what if EOHLC does not approve of this Regulatory Agreement? 8.2.2 of the ZBL requires that *'Affordable units shall conform to all requirements for inclusion in the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory.'* And the guidelines for 40B require that no leases can be executed prior to the Regulatory Agreement being approved and recorded.

How would the Redevelopment Board and Inspectional Services deal with a non-compliant building in which residents have already moved in? It would be a terrible, messy situation with no easy solutions.

It would be better to fill the current hole in the enforcement process to insure that this problem could not arise. The simple remedy would be to make the filing of the approved Regulatory Agreement a precondition for a Certificate of Occupancy. This would be entirely consistent with existing ZBL 8.2.2.

Thank you for your consideration.

Don Seltzer